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A HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

BY

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PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN GLASGOW UNIVERSITY

AND MASTER OF BALLIOL COLLEGE, OXFORD

This volume is dedicated in token
of gratitude and reverence by one
of his students who, although led
to abandon his philosophy, yet
cherishes his teaching as a most
precious possession.

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PREFACE

In the preparation of this volume the writer has aimed at justifying the title by as complete an outline of the argument for the Christian faith as the intellectual situation of to-day demands. This has necessitated the omission of minute discussion of many of the topics. For the general character of the treatment compensation has been offered in two ways: by reference to other volumes in this series dealing with some of the subjects, or to other relevant writings, and by indicating when the writer himself has dealt with the subject at greater length. The order of the chapters has been determined with the view of exhibiting as far as possible a continuous argument. In accordance with his idea of the task of Apologetics as commendation rather than defence, less attention has been given to meeting objections than to presenting the attractiveness of the Christian Gospel. The writer has not hesitated in stating conclusions reached by himself after much study and thought, in the hope that they will be as helpful to others as to himself. No attempt has been, or could be, made to indicate in every instance the source of arguments and suggestions offered, as for the writer many have become part of his own mental stock. He gladly acknowledges a far greater debt to other writers than his express references can indicate. The bibliography, too, makes no pretence to be exhaustive. It is confined to the books known to the writer which he has found helpful, and which from personal knowledge he can commend to others. While

due prominence has throughout been given to Christian experience as the basis of Christian certainty, a lesson which the writer has learned from his study of Ritschl, he has endeavoured to recognise the just rights of reason, and so to be true to the influence of the great teacher, to whose memory this book is dedicated.

New College,
London, *5th November* 1912.

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A HANDBOOK OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The Purpose and the Problems

(1) THE Greek word ἀπολογία (ἀπό and λόγος) means a speech in defence; it may be of a fact as true, or against a charge as false. The phrase ἀπολογεῖσθαι δίκην θανατοῦ means to speak against the sentence of death being passed. In the *Apology* Plato gives the defence of Socrates against the charges which led to his death. Turning to the use of the word in the New Testament, we find Festus declaring 'that it is not the custom of the Romans to give up any man before that the accused have the accusers face to face, and have had opportunity to make his defence (apology) concerning the matter laid against him' (Acts xxv. 16). Paul uses the word of 'the clearing of themselves' by the Corinthians (2 Cor. vii. 11). He addresses the Philippians as partakers with him of grace in 'bonds and in the defence (apology) and confirmation of the Gospel' (Phil. i. 7). The writers who, in the second and third centuries, defended Christianity against the arguments and calumnies of Judaism and Paganism are usually described as the *Apologists*. One of these, Tertullian, entitled his work the *Apologeticus* or *Apologeticum*. The word *Apologetic* is used as an adjective in English first of all in the title of a book in 1649, 'An Apologetic Declaration of the conscientious Presbyterians of the Province of

London,' and as a noun in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, but spelt *Apologetique*. The first use of the plural form for 'the defensive method of argument' is found in North's *Lives* about 1733, 'to drop these apologetics.' The first use in the strictly technical sense of 'the argumentative defence of Christianity,' seems to be found in the *Penny Cyclopædia* in 1834. 'The science of apologetics was unknown till the attacks of the adversaries of Christianity assumed a learned and scientific character.' In the same sense the singular form of the word occurs in the *Athenæum*, 1882: 'The kind of book . . . most rational of all in the way of Christian apologetic.'[1] Whether in the plural or the singular form it seems desirable to treat the word as a collective singular, just as we treat mathematics, ethics, or æsthetics; and in the following pages the writer will use the corresponding verb or pronoun in the singular, even when the plural form of the word may be employed. It need hardly be added that the less reputable use of *apology* in the sense of an excuse, more or less invalid, or of *apologetic* as describing an undignified or even servile manner, is quite irrelevant to the meaning of the word *Apologetics*.

(2) Before attempting more closely to define the purpose of Apologetics, a brief historical survey of the more prominent writings in this class of Christian literature may be given.

(i) First of all comes the New Testament. That it bears this character has been very ably and thoroughly shown in a recent book, Scott's *The Apologetic of the New Testament*. 'From the beginning,' he says, 'our religion had been called on to defend itself against misunderstandings and bitter opposition. Our Lord Himself is aware that His legacy to His followers will not be peace, but a sword, and the strife which He anticipated began with the very moment of His death. His disciples were thrown from the first into conflict with their own countrymen. The Gentile mission involved them in a further conflict with the Pagan

[1] See Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon*; Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, and Murray's *English Dictionary*, vol. i.

world, to which their message proved strange and unintelligible. At every step of its progress Christianity was exposed to some fresh antagonism, and could only maintain itself by an unceasing struggle. Our New Testament came into being in the process of this struggle which is everywhere reflected in it. Paul and his fellow apostles are always conscious that they stand for a religion which is spoken against, and one chief purpose of their writing is to vindicate the gospel in view of the attacks. It may be accepted as one of the most certain results of modern criticism, that the New Testament is permeated with an apologetic interest, which is often strongest when it is least apparent.' [1] To give only a few instances, the Synoptic Gospels defend the Messiahship of Jesus, and the Fourth Gospel seeks to prove Him the Incarnate Logos as Life and Light to men. The Acts of the Apostles seeks to show that Christianity is a religion deserving toleration in the Roman Empire. The Epistle to the Romans vindicates Paul's gospel. The Epistle to the Hebrews demonstrates the superiority of Christianity to Judaism as a reason against apostasy.

(ii) Mention has already been made of the Apologists, and a few sentences descriptive of their labours may be quoted. 'The Christians,' says Schaff, 'were indeed from the first "ready always to give an answer to every man that asked them a reason of the hope that was in them." But when heathenism took the field against them, not only with fire and sword, but with argument and slander besides, they had to add to their simple practical testimony a theoretical self-defence. . . . The apologetic literature began to appear under the reign of Hadrian, and continued to grow till the end of our period (A.D. 311). Most of the church teachers took part in this labour of their day. . . . Here at once appears the characteristic difference between the Greek and the Latin minds. The Greek apologies are more learned and philosophical, the Latin more practical and juridical in their matter and style. The former labour to

[1] Pp. 2-3.

prove the truth of Christianity and its adaptedness to the intellectual wants of man; the latter plead for its legal right to exist, and exhibit mainly its moral excellency and salutary effect upon society. The Latin also are in general more rigidly opposed to heathenism, while the Greeks recognise in the Grecian philosophy a certain affinity to the Christian religion.'[1] One of the earliest and also finest examples of this class of literature is the *Epistle to Diognetus*, the authorship of which is altogether unknown. 'It is,' says Schaff, 'a brief but masterly vindication of Christian life and doctrine from actual experience. It is evidently the product of a man of genius, fine taste, and classical culture. It excels in fresh enthusiasm of faith, richness of thought, and elegance of style, and is altogether one of the most beautiful memorials of Christian antiquity, unsurpassed and hardly equalled by any genuine work of the Apostolic Fathers.'[2] Among the most notable of the Greek apologies, which we possess complete, are the works of Justin, who died in 166. His first or larger *Apology*, and his second or smaller *Apology*, 'are both a defence of the Christians and their religion against heathen calumnies and persecutions. He demands nothing but justice for his brethren, who were condemned without trial, simply as Christians and suspected criminals.' 'His *Dialogue* is a vindication of Christianity from Moses and the prophets against the objections of the Jews.'[3] Minucius Felix, a convert, 'who brought the rich stores of classical culture to the service of Christianity,' and who 'shares with Lactantius the honour of being the Christian Cicero,' wrote 'an apology of Christianity in the form of a dialogue under the title *Octavius*.' 'It gives us a lively idea of the great controversy between the old and the new religion among the higher and the cultivated classes of Roman society, and allows fair play and full force to the arguments on both sides. It is an able and eloquent defence of monotheism against polytheism, and of Christian morality against heathen

[1] *Ante-Nicene Christianity*, vol. i. pp. 105-6.
[2] *Ibid.*, ii. p. 701. [3] Pp. 716-17.

immorality. But this is about all. The exposition of the truths of Christianity is meagre, superficial, and defective.' [1] The last sentence indicates a not uncommon fault in some of these writings—a greater mastery of the philosophy abandoned than of the faith accepted.

(iii) One of the classical works in Christian literature is Augustine's *City of God*. In the days when Rome was tottering to her fall, many minds were turning from the new faith to the old, and arguing that Paganism might have preserved what Christianity was destroying. 'Augustine,' says Fairbairn, 'stood forward to defend the Faith so gravely assailed. His apology was twofold, concerned at once fact and idea. As to the matter of fact, Rome, he pleaded, was dying of her pagan vices,' and 'the Rome that had died of Paganism Christ was doing His best to save. But it was the matter of ideal principle that moved Augustine to grandest eloquence and argument.' To the earthly city of Rome he opposed the heavenly city of the Christian Church. 'The city of Rome ruled the bodies and died through the vices of its people; but this city rules the spirits and lives through the virtues of its citizens, the saints of God.' [2]

(iv) During the centuries after the fall of Rome, when Christianity, having become dominant, was subjecting to Christian culture and civilisation the new nations which rose upon Rome's ruins, apologetic literature was not called for. In the tenth and eleventh centuries a revival of religion was accompanied by an intellectual awakening, and men were trying to understand by reason what on the authority of the Church they had accepted by faith. A leader in this movement was Anselm, who combined with a profoundly religious spirit 'a confidence in the power and validity of human thought which lends an extraordinary boldness to much of his speculation.' While he confesses as his guiding principle, *Credo ut intelligam*, and subordinates human reason to ecclesiastical authority,

[1] *Ante-Nicene Christianity*, ii. pp. 835-8.
[2] Fairbairn's *The City of God*, pp. 350-2.

yet he holds that dogma is rational. His *Monologium* 'attempts, putting aside all Scripture authority, to prove the being of God in the light of pure reason, and then to define His nature and attributes, His relation to the world and men.' In a second work, the *Proslogium*, he advances the ontological argument for the existence of God, about which there has since been so much discussion.[1]

(v) At the Reformation there arose the necessity for defending the doctrines advanced by Luther and other reformers. Melanchthon was the author of the *Augsburg Confession*, 'the authoritative exposition of the Lutheran theology,' and also of 'the copious Apology for the Confession.'[2] Calvin's *Christianæ Religionis Institutio* is avowedly apologetic in intention. 'He says in his preface that he wrote the book with two distinct purposes. He meant it to prepare and qualify students of theology for reading the Divine Word, that they may have an easy introduction to it, and be able to proceed in it without obstruction. He also meant it to be a vindication of the teaching of the Reformers against the calumnies of their enemies, who had urged the King of France to persecute them and drive them from France.'[3] As it was a defence of a particular kind of doctrine which was being offered, the dogmatic could be combined with the apologetic method, although generally it is desirable to distinguish and separate them.

(vi) The greater liberty and activity of mind within Christendom since the Renaissance and the Reformation have involved more numerous and thorough attacks on Christian truth, and have, therefore, necessitated a more constant and varied defence. But for the present purpose, to illustrate what the task of Apologetic has been conceived to be, only two works need be mentioned, Butler's *Analogy* (1736) and Paley's *Natural Theology* (1803). Butler does not attempt a complete defence of the Christian faith. 'I

[1] See Welch's *Anselm and His Work*, chap. iv.
[2] Fisher's *History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 273.
[3] Lindsay's *History of the Reformation*, ii. p. 99.

desire it may be considered, that in this treatise I have argued upon the principles of others, not my own; and I have omitted what I think true and of the utmost importance, because by others thought unintelligible, or not true.' Deism opposed to Christianity a natural religion, all additions to which were declared to be injurious accretions. In his *Analogy* Butler goes out to meet the foes in their own field, whereas in his *Sermons* (1726) he states his own position, a theism based on the testimony of conscience. 'It was characteristic,' says Fairbairn, 'that Butler's *Analogy* was more esteemed than his *Sermons on Human Nature*; an argument that proved natural religion, which yet never was a religion of nature, to be more heavily burdened by intellectual and moral difficulties, when taken by itself, than when completed and crowned by revealed, was much better adapted to the age than one built on the supremacy of conscience. The latter was so little considered that its fundamental inconsistency with the doctrine of probability on which the *Analogy* is based was never perceived.' [1] All Butler aimed at was to show that even on the principles accepted by his opponents, Christianity could claim greater probability as a solution of moral and religious problems than could natural religion. The limitation of his aim must be regarded in the valuation of his work, which displays what we shall soon see to be a necessary feature of apologetic literature, a close adaptation to the intellectual situation. Paley has in recent years been much disparaged, but he must be judged, not from the standpoint of the knowledge of to-day, but of his own time. He satisfied its intellectual necessities, as he expressed its mental tendencies. 'For Theism,' says Fairbairn, 'the argument from design was in the ascendant; adaptation was as charmed a word then as evolution is now; everything was judged by its fitness for its end—the more perfect the contrivance the more irrefragable the evidence. Design was discovered in the organs of sense, in the hand of man, in the relation

[1] Fairbairn's *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 11.

between the functions of digestion and the chemistry of food, in all the adaptations of man to nature and nature to man.'[1] It is on this argument Paley 'mostly relies, and he manipulates his material with consummate skill,' drawing on 'all the sciences of his day,' and seemingly willing to use whatever contemporary thought offered him.[2]

(vii) During the last century there was an enormous expansion of human knowledge, a profound modification of human thought; and that is the sole reason why Butler and Paley seem to us to be so inadequate to the apologetic task. No work dealing with the contemporary situation has as yet acquired the same reputation as these books had in their own day. A vindication of religious experience, even in somewhat abnormal forms, has been offered in James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. An argument for the value of religion as a potent factor in *Social Evolution* has been developed by Benjamin Kidd. Balfour in his *Foundations of Belief*, however unsatisfactory his construction, has in his criticism most effectively exposed the pretensions of naturalism. One can hardly estimate too highly the value of Ward's two series of Gifford Lectures, *Naturalism and Agnosticism* and the *Realm of Ends*, as a defence of theism against opposing scientific and philosophical tendencies of to-day. The writer is constrained as a tribute of affection and gratitude to mention the work of his two honoured teachers, Edward Caird and Andrew M. Fairbairn. The former has from the Hegelian standpoint described *The Evolution of Religion*, and the latter has very fully and thoroughly expounded *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*. Bruce endeavoured to cover the whole field, philosophical, historical, critical, in his book on *Apologetics*; and, in essaying so wide a task, exposed his limitations as well as displayed his excellences.[3]

[1] Fairbairn's *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 11.
[2] Caldecott's *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 130.
[3] For other modern works the bibliography at the end of this volume may be consulted.

(3) In the sub-title of his book, Bruce has described Apologetics as *Christianity defensively stated.*

(i) He quotes Ebrard's *Apologetik*, i. 3, to show the distinction between an Apology and Apologetics, and the quotation is significant enough for our purpose to be repeated in full. 'Apologetic differs from simple apology by method based on a distinct principle. There are apologies which consist of replies to definite attacks on Christianity, and allow their method to be determined by these. Such, *e.g.*, were the two apologies of Justin Martyr, which deal with a series of single attacks, and are excellent as apologies, though very insufficient as apologetic. Christian apologetic differs from apology in this that, instead of allowing its course to be fixed by the accidental assaults made at a particular time, it deduces the method of defence and the defence itself out of the essence of Christianity. Every apologetic is apology, but not every apology is apologetic. Apologetic is that science which, from the essence of Christianity itself, determines what kinds of attack are possible, what sides of Christian truth are open to attack, and what false principles lie at the foundation of all attacks actual or possible.'

(ii) Bruce himself declines to tread this high 'a priori' way, he prefers the more lowly 'a posteriori' path; instead of trying to deduce from the essence of Christianity what attacks are possible and what defences necessary, he prefers by the method of historical induction to learn 'both the sources of attack and the laws of defence.'[1] His own intention he clearly expresses in his preface to his book: 'It is an apologetic presentation of the Christian faith with reference to whatever in our intellectual environment makes faith difficult at the present time. The constituency to which it addresses itself consists neither of dogmatic believers, for whose satisfaction it seeks to show how triumphantly their faith can at all possible points of assault be defended, nor of dogmatic unbelievers whom it strives to convince or confound, but of men whose

[1] Bruce's *Apologetics*, p. 34.

sympathies are with Christianity, but whose faith is "stifled or weakened by anti-Christian prejudices of varied nature and origin." The aim dictates the method. It leads to the selection of topics of pressing concern, burning questions, leaving on one side, or throwing into the background, subjects which formerly occupied the foreground in apologetic treatises.' [1]

(iii) With very slight modifications the writer accepts this statement of the purpose of Apologetics. Dr. Bruce's own words suggest a change of his sub-title. He is not content with, nor even does he mainly aim at, defence. He wants to win the doubtful rather than the denying, the hesitant rather than the defiant; he desires not to confute and confound, but to persuade. Hence his more appropriate sub-title would be *Christianity persuasively stated.* This the writer wishes to emphasise, as what he desires is to win for the Christian faith the unbeliever or the doubter, and to strengthen the faith of the believer who is bewildered and uncertain. It is no merely verbal alteration which is involved, but it is a general attitude which is insisted on; and needs to be insisted on, as the converse has been too prevalent. There are books of Apologetics the mention of which would give them an advertisement which they do not deserve, of which it could be said that in them Christianity is *offensively stated* both in the primary and secondary sense of the word. To attack is as legitimate as to defend. The most effective attack may sometimes be the most efficient defence. To prove Christianity true it may be necessary to prove its rivals or opponents false. Even persuasion may require an exposure of the inadequacy and defect of views that hinder acceptance of the Christian faith, as well as a display of the excellence and sufficiency of Christian truth. The war may be carried into the enemy's camp, as well as be waged around the citadel of the faith. But the rules of civilised warfare must be strictly observed. The secondary sense of the word offensive as regards the

[1] Bruce's *Apologetics*, pp. v-vi.

manner must not go along with the primary sense as regards the method. The attack has been made on the position of opponents with a fierceness of tone and a ruthlessness of logic that discredit rather than defend the Christian position. To write as though one's own argument were so irrefutable that only a fool could fail to accept it, and only a knave could dare to reject it, is to provoke and not to persuade opponents. The manner should be appropriate to the matter and the method. A gospel of grace should be commended and defended graciously.

(iv) While Apologetics must address itself to the 'burning questions,' its method need not be unsystematic, as Bruce's words suggest, although his own book is not. The writer in this volume, however, has attempted to order his material in such a way as, while dealing with the 'topics of pressing concern,' to present as continuous an argument as he can. There is a common intellectual, moral, and religious situation, to which we may apply the term organic. The difficulties, the doubts, and the denials in regard to the Christian faith are not isolated or unrelated, but are connected in many ways; and accordingly the Christian argument that meets all these may aim at unity, even if it should fail in achieving it entirely. A glance at the table of contents in this book might suggest that the writer is offering rather an exposition of the Christian faith than a defence. How these two treatments of the common subject are related to one another is the question that must next be discussed.

(4) It is usual among systematic theologians to offer the exposition of Christian truth in three divisions: Apologetics, dogmatics, ethics. The distinction of the second and the third is obvious. The former deals with what the Christian believes, and the latter with what the Christian ought to be and to do. The former describes the object of faith, the latter determines the ideal of duty. But it is not quite so easy to determine the limits of Apologetics and dogmatics, or to separate their contents from one

another. It has even been argued that there is no need for a special branch of theology—Apologetics—to undertake the task of defending or commending Christianity, for the statement of the Christian faith in dogmatics should be itself the best defence or commendation which can be offered of it. But against this view two considerations may be advanced. A complete constructive statement may be made without discussing in detail the objections from different standpoints advanced against Christianity; and yet it is necessary and desirable that these objections should be thoroughly met. Further, the standpoint of dogmatics is that of Christian faith. As that faith is not common to all, there is room for, and need of, a branch of Christian theology which will seek the points of contact between Christian faith and the current thought and life, in order to show how an advance may be made from the latter to the former. Christian Apologetics seeks to win for the Christian faith, which dogmatics describes, and the Christian duty, which ethics prescribes, thoughtful and serious men by, on the one hand, removing the hindrances that contemporary modes of thought or life may interpose, and on the other, presenting the arguments that appeal most to the reason and the conscience of the age. While in both dogmatics and ethics there must be an adaptation to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual environment, in apologetics this reference to the contemporary tendencies and necessities must be more constant, direct, and insistent.

(5) Accordingly in Christian Apologetics we must concern ourselves primarily with the thought and life of our own age, must take up the questions that are forced on Christian faith by the surroundings, and must exercise our practical wisdom in determining what are the subjects which, in the defence or the commendation of the Christian gospel, the contemporary conditions make most urgent. There must be selection, as it is clearly impossible that all the matters relating to Christian creed or conduct should be fully discussed. Nevertheless it is desirable that the Christian Apologist should possess for himself at least

some general view of the relations of the different branches of human knowledge to one another, and of the place of Christian theology in the system of human thought. As the two divisions of Christian theology, dogmatics and ethics, show, Christianity is both religion and morality; or more correctly, even the distinction of religion and morality is transcended in a higher unity of Christian life receptive from God in faith, and communicative to man in love, while anticipative of its perfect fruition and realisation in hope. In the last two chapters of this volume there will be offered an exposition and vindication of the Christian hope and also of the Christian ideal, as both are widely challenged to-day, but most of this volume must be devoted to the proof that the Christian view of God, the world, and man is *true*; but, as we cannot isolate Christianity from all other religion, this involves an argument that religion is no imposture or illusion. We must maintain the significance and value of the religious view generally, and the superiority of the Christian view as proved truth and assured good for men. With regard to the first task we are primarily concerned with science and philosophy, and in respect of the second with criticism and the comparative study of religion.

(i) When science keeps within its own proper sphere, the observation, classification, and correlation of phenomena, physical, mental, or moral, or even religious, it does not, and cannot, come into conflict with Christian faith; it is only when philosophical hypotheses are advanced as scientific conclusions that conflict arises. Such assertions as that man has no liberty, but is determined by his heredity and environment; that he is not immortal, because the brain produces thought; that miracles are impossible because the continuity of phenomenal causes is unbroken; that God is an unnecessary assumption, because physical force explains the universe, are not scientific, and have not the validity of conclusions reached by the method of science; they imply a philosophy or general view of the world as a whole, and have to be met

by challenging the adequacy of that philosophy. It is true that Christian theology at one time felt itself bound to defend certain views about the world and man, because of their supposed Scripture authority, with which the assured results of science were in conflict. But the Christian Apologist to-day fully and frankly recognises that the Bible is not, and was never meant to be, a text-book of science. He does not challenge astronomy because it does not assign to the earth the central position in the universe, round which sun and stars are moving. He does not try to reconcile geology and Genesis as to the duration of the earth, or the order of the creation of plants and beasts. He does not insist against biology on the special creation of every species, or regard it necessary for man's dignity to deny his physical descent from lower forms of life. He does not maintain that primitive man was perfect in wisdom and holiness, and is prepared to learn all that anthropology may be able to teach about man's original condition. He does not argue for either the bipartite or the tripartite character, the dichotomy or the trichotomy of man's nature against the psychologist's insistence on the unity of human personality as thinking, feeling, willing. He does feel warranted in denying as scientific certain popular views which are sometimes advanced by naturalism as based on science. Man's worth is not lessened because his home appears but as a speck in the vastness of the universe, or his history as a span in the duration of the world. Life has not been derived from the non-living, nor consciousness from the unconscious. Evolution has not been proved so continuous as to exclude fresh stages, unaccounted for by all that went before. The development of man in manners, morals, laws, society, science, philosophy, art, literature, religion proves that he is more than one of the animals. That the primitive man is represented by the savage of to-day is altogether doubtful, as decadence is possible as well as progress.

(ii) It is not with science and its approved methods and assured results that the religious view comes into conflict,

but with assumptions and conjectures that attach themselves illegitimately to science, but are properly described as philosophical. No philosophy can claim such a certainty as could properly silence the testimony of the religious consciousness, or of Christian faith regarding the ultimate reality. With respect to the relation of Christian Apologetics to philosophy, four considerations may be offered. In the *first place*, the legitimacy of the endeavours of philosophy to form a world-view cannot be questioned. The challenge which philosophy may offer to the religious or Christian world-view cannot be met by denying its right to offer such a world-view, but only by showing its inadequacy or partiality.

Secondly, Christian Apologetics may insist that in answering these last questions that the mind can ask, not only must the speculative curiosity be satisfied, but the moral ideals must find their vindication, and the religious aspirations their fulfilment. It is the whole man who must answer the questions of the world-as-a-whole. The moral conscience and the religious consciousness offer data which must be taken into account as fully and thoroughly as the data of science. If a historical personality have a unique value for the moral conscience and the religious consciousness, a corresponding estimate of him must be allowed in any philosophy of history. The defect of most philosophies has been that they have been too dominantly intellectualist in interest, and too exclusively epistemological in method; and this partiality is their defect as philosophy, and may be condemned as such.

Thirdly, the Christian Apologist may insist even that in answering these final questions, morality and religion are more authoritative than science. The theoretical reason does not penetrate as deeply into the noumenal, which is the explanation of the phenomenal, as does the practical and the spiritual reason. Rejecting Kant's scepticism regarding the constitutive as well as regulative value of the ideas of the theoretical reason, we must give a wider significance to the postulates of the practical

reason; and we must add, what he was not religious enough to add, but what the universal presence and dominant influence of religion in human experience compels us to add, the intuitions of the spiritual reason, the human vision of, communion with, and possession by the divine. The saint and the seer need not use the tones of 'whispering humbleness' in the presence of the philosopher, for they have the secret of the holy and the divine which thought alone will not yield.

Fourthly, philosophy may be of great use to the Christian Apologists. There are many conclusions regarding the nature of human knowledge, the validity of human thought, the interpretation of the world and man, which Christian Apologetics need not deal with in detail, but which it may accept from the special investigator, and utilise for its own more general purpose. Theology cannot be divorced from philosophy, nor need the marriage between them be unhappy.

(iii) It is evident that there are philosophies which so contradict the testimony of Christian faith that the Christian Apologist can only oppose and reject them. The *materialism* which attempts to account for the universe exclusively by matter-in-motion, is the denial of morality as well as religion. The *monism* of a Haeckel is only a materialism which seeks to cover its nakedness by the fig-leaf of a meaningless phrase about a reality both matter and mind, while it actually derives mind from matter, and is as non-moral and irreligious. The *agnosticism* of a Herbert Spencer shows how little it apprehends or appreciates what religion really is, when it imagines that it has handsomely provided for all the soul's needs by bidding it rear an altar to an Unknowable Ultimate Reality. Even the *naturalism* which, without confessing itself materialistic, monistic, or agnostic, as regards the ultimate reality, treats man as a part and product of Nature, and not as a person beyond and above Nature, and seeks to solve all problems in terms of physical science, degrades man in ignoring God. Not only do

these philosophies prove their inadequacy when moral and religious tests are applied, but it can be shown that even as explanations of Nature they fall short. The necessary limits of this volume forbid the demonstration of their falsity here, although the writer has himself for his own mental satisfaction gone over all the ground that would need to be covered; but the reader may be referred to Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism* especially as a masterly treatment of all the questions here arising.[1]

(iv) The Christian Apologist assumes that man is capable of gaining and holding the *truth* about God, himself, and the world, and so giving an answer to the questions of the essential reality, ultimate cause, and final purpose of the universe. We need not here involve ourselves in the very abstract problem whether truth is the agreement of thought and reality, or the consistency of thought with itself, or 'eventual verification.' What we mean by truth is that man thinks God, world, and self as they are. It is the task of *epistemology* to deal with this problem of the validity of human knowledge; and Christian Apologetics must reject any epistemology which denies that man can know truth. The *agnosticism* of Spencer tries to limit the incapacity of the human mind to the realm of religion, while assuming that in the realm of science man can and does know. But any such limitation is arbitrary; even if it were contended that sense at least is trustworthy, for 'knowledge is of things we see,' the 'synthetic philosophy' could not escape doubt, for it carries us far beyond the data of sense. The *scepticism* of Hume is more consistent, as it includes even the principle of causality, that basal category of modern science among the things that are to be shaken; but it is not wholly consistent, for the logical issue of scepticism is that it annuls itself, for it must doubt its own doubt. If man cannot know, how can he know that he cannot know? But Hume's scepticism has its great value in the history of philosophy, for it is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the

[1] See also Rashdall's *Philosophy and Religion.*

empiricism, sensationalism, and associationalism that would derive all knowledge from an experience limited to the data of sense, and the associations that the data form, and undetermined by reason in man. The *intuitionalism* of the deists, and the *common-sense* philosophy of the Scotch school, are both right in insisting that in knowledge there is an element underived from sense; but their common assumption that the human mind brings with it a ready-made stock of ideas, moral and religious as well as theoretical, is to-day an anachronism in view of what we know both of racial evolution and individual development. Kant offered a more adequate reply to Hume than the Scotch school. He attempted to exhibit the unity of the reason that constitutes the data of sense into knowledge, by a more exhaustive and systematic analysis of the contents of knowledge, to show the principles necessary to knowledge as a consistent unity. But in denying the constitutive as well as regulative value of the ideas of the pure reason, he fell back into scepticism, from which his postulates of the practical reason offer only a sorry means of escape. We must go beyond Kant in insisting that the subjective reason is not alone in the universe, but reproduces the objective reason, and that the necessities of the one correspond to the realities of the other. Kant's *subjective* or *critical idealism*, if it is not to leave us in scepticism, must lead us on to objective or absolute idealism. This step was taken by Hegel; but to the Hegelian solution the writer, though under the spell of the fine intellect and noble personality of Edward Caird he was for a time held in thrall by it, must urge two objections. In the *first place*, the Absolute Spirit is too exclusively a logical idea, or the standpoint is too narrowly intellectualist, so that due weight is not given to the witness of the practical and spiritual as of the theoretical reason. In the *second place*, the Objective Reason is too closely identified with the Subjective Reason, so that the progress of the universe through man to self-consciousness appears as the evolution of God Himself. This philosophy is not only a *pantheism*, which, by abolishing

the distinction between God and man, and so excluding their mutual relations destroys religions, but as Spirit = Idea the pantheism is rather a *panlogism*, as Pfleiderer has rightly described it. In Lotze's insistence on feeling as the test of value, in the tendency of modern psychology to subordinate cognition to conation, in Eucken's *activism*, with its demand that man shall raise himself by spiritual life into contact with the absolute spiritual life, in Bergson's plea that only by intuition can man hold reality as a whole, while intellect seizes only one side of it, the writer recognises movements towards what he conceives to be a higher standpoint. He cannot with *pragmatism* subordinate truth to use or worth; for man's subjective purpose must in some measure correspond with the objective purpose of his world, if it is not to be thwarted; and even if his conceptions of the world are affected by the use he desires to make of it, he will not gain the mastery over it for his own ends even, unless these conceptions, tested and corrected in actual contact with the world, correspond with its reality. There is an objective reality which reveals itself to man as ideals of duty, and ideas of truth; for even if man's world be in the making, the pattern thereof is laid up in heaven. Bergson's rejection of teleology in his *Creative Evolution* is surely only a prejudice against a mechanical idea of design. The unity, identity, and consistency of personality does not exclude liberty; and so the immanent purpose of the universe may realise itself in varied spontaneous movement, and need not involve any rigid predetermination. Personality, with final authority for the moral conscience and the religious consciousness, is for the writer the ultimate category, perfect in the objective reason—God, progressive in the subjective reason—man. He conceives man as by nature receptive mentally, morally, and spiritually for God, and God as communicative in truth, holiness, grace to man. While he does affirm a contact and communion with God of the individual man in religion, yet as humanity is organic, the individual by his very constitution social, the individual development

is for the most part mediated by the family, tribal, national, and racial evolution. This philosophy may be called *personalism*; and it is implicit throughout all that follows in this volume, while, in discussing some of the questions before us, it will necessarily be made more explicit. This is only a preliminary statement of it; its exposition and justification will be attempted in the following pages.

(v) As Christianity presents itself as a historical reality, recorded and interpreted in literary sources, the Christian Apologist cannot be indifferent to the results of literary and historical criticism. There are many questions of date and authorship which make no difference whatever to the truth or worth of Christian faith; but with the credibility of the literary sources as giving us the certainty of the historical reality of divine revelation and human redemption in Christ we must concern ourselves in the subsequent discussion.

(vi) The claim for Christianity as the absolute religion, destined, because deserving, to be universal, is to-day met by the challenge of other faiths; and that challenge does not come merely from the adherents of these faiths. It is contended even by Christian thinkers that, even if Christianity is the best and truest religion we know, we have no right to affirm that it is the best and truest conceivable. The Christian Apologist must utilise the material provided by the comparative study of religions to show the superiority of Christianity to all the other faiths; with the guidance of the psychology of religion he must discover the necessities and possibilities of man's religious nature, and then prove how Christ meets the one and fulfils the other. For him the *philosophy of religion* must afford not only the vindication of the value of religion, and the *philosophy of theism* the evidence of the validity of the idea of God; but both of these, under the illumination and inspiration of his Christian faith, become the tutors who lead to the Master Christ.

Such are the problems with which this volume must attempt to deal as adequately as the limits of space will allow.

CHAPTER II

RELIGION AND REVELATION

I

(1) During last century a great change took place in the treatment of religion by science and philosophy. It is no longer dismissed as an invention of priests or rulers for their own ends, or as merely a survival of barbarism, but accepted as a fact to be carefully studied. The sacred scriptures of other religions have come to be known and studied by Christian scholars; the excavations in Egypt and Mesopotamia and other eastern lands have shown how large a place religion filled in the ancient world; familiarity on the part of missionaries and travellers with the beliefs and the customs of savage peoples is proving that there is no race so low in the scale of civilisation as to be without some movement of the spirit beyond the bounds of the sensible. The opinion, once held by some writers on the subject, that there are tribes which can be described as atheistic, is now being abandoned. For we are recognising that the inquiry as to whether a tribe has a religion or not is not so easy as it once seemed. On the one hand, the missionary or the traveller, having his own definite conception of what religion should be, may fail to detect religion under unfamiliar forms; and on the other hand, the native, suspicious of strangers, is likely to conceal as far as he can what is his most sacred possession from any prying eye. A stranger must live a long time among an uncivilised people, and must win their confidence and intimacy, before he can gain an accurate knowledge of their religion. Archæology, anthropology, and ethnology in the

multitude of facts collected by them regarding the past and present of mankind, are constantly confirming the conclusion that religion is universal in the race; that man, being what he is, cannot but be religious. It is possible for the man, whose culture has suppressed his natural impulses, to be secular, agnostic, atheistic; but in the spontaneous development of human nature religion appears to be inevitable.

(2) The comparative study of religions leads us a step farther. At first sight the endless variety of religious beliefs and customs gives the impression of a *chaos* in which no order or law is discoverable, but a closer study shows that here, too, there is *cosmos*, for many uniformities can be traced. Differences, climatic, racial, economic, social, affect the forms which the religious life assumes; and much remains to be done in showing that the diversity in these forms is not altogether accidental or arbitrary; yet the soul of man is one and the same, and striking similarities in religious ideas and rites prove this. Such similarities need not be explained as the borrowings of one religion from another, nor be marvelled at as curious coincidences, but may be regarded as evidence that the human mind functions in the same way, wherever the conditions are to any degree similar. It is not at all necessary to assume that the religious development of every people has been exactly the same, showing the same phases and passing through the same stages. There have been, in varying degrees, in different races, stagnation, progress, decadence. One race has been influenced by another, and its progress been retarded and advanced. Nevertheless, it seems possible to sketch the normal religious progress of the race, assigning in the process its proper place to each form which the religious life has assumed.[1]

(3) The comparative study of religions thus leads us on to the psychology of religion. If amid all variety of beliefs

[1] The writer has attempted to do this in his book, *The Christian Certainty amid the Modern Perplexity*, pp. 64-76.

and customs there is but one and the same religious life expressed, it is possible to study the working of the human soul in religion, what it thinks, how it feels, at what it aims in this particular relation. What are the conceptions, emotions, and volitions which are distinctive of religion? It cannot be affirmed that there is any general agreement on all the questions raised; but it may be maintained that there is a growing tendency towards agreement. There is less inclination than there was to treat religion as a kind of mental aberration; and it is being recognised as the normal response of the spirit of man to his supersensible environment.

(i) Many attempts have been made to state in a few words what religion is. But even great thinkers have committed themselves to definitions which are partial. To take only three great German thinkers in illustration of this statement—Hegel, Kant, and Schleiermacher—each lays stress on only one of the psychic factors. Hegel's view of religion as a less adequate apprehension of ultimate reality than that reached by philosophy recognises only its intellectual aspect. Kant's attempt to reduce religion to morality in confining it to the recognition of our moral obligations as divine commands, regards it only as practical, only in so far as it affects man's action. Schleiermacher comes nearer the core of the matter when he defines religion as the sense of dependence on God, as feeling is essential to religion; but he, too, unduly isolates this one aspect from the others. What the failure of these definitions teaches us is, that in religion the whole personality of man is exercised, and that thought, feeling, and will are all factors. There is not, as mysticism has sometimes assumed, an organ of religion distinct from the activity of the whole personality in thinking, feeling, willing; and it cannot even be shown that there is any peculiarity in the exercise of mind, heart, and will in religion absent from the ordinary activity of the human personality. Subjectively we cannot fix what is distinctive of religion.

(ii) We must look from the subject to the object of

religion to discover its distinctiveness. To say that religion is the relation of man to God is to import an advanced stage of the development of man's religious thought into its earlier stages. The word God has too definite a content to describe generally the object of religion. If we use the term divine at all, we must be prepared to assign to it a very vague meaning. It is the supersensible, the superhuman, the supernatural, to which man relates himself in his religion. He recognises beyond the visible the invisible, above himself power greater than his own, over the forces of Nature, even such as he knows, forces greater still. He confesses his dependence on these invisible greater powers or forces; they can advance or hinder his good, they can restrain or inflict evil. He endeavours to enter into such relations with them as will avert their displeasure, or secure their favour.

(iii) It is not an explanation of the world around him that he primarily seeks in religion. There has been a widespread tendency among theologians, philosophers, and even anthropologists to lay too much stress on this intellectual factor of religion. The theory that seeks to account for religion by *animism*, the explanation of movement and change in the world around by the belief in spirits, too exclusively identifies primitive religion with primitive science or philosophy. In discarding animism science is not superseding religion, but is itself advancing from the primitive to the more mature intellectual stage. It is not an intellectual curiosity that man satisfies in his religious beliefs; he is meeting a practical necessity. It is the protection of, and the provision for, his own life about which he is concerned; and he spontaneously, and not deliberately, conceives his world so that this purpose seems practicable.

(iv) In the conception which is distinctive of religion there is progress; without tracing that progress in detail, we may note one feature of it: the divine is first of all conceived vaguely as a multitude of spirits, and then more distinctly thought of as a smaller company of gods.

It is not suggested that the believer consciously makes such a distinction; but the modern thinker, looking back on the development, can. Spirits and gods seem to be distinguished in three respects. The gods are more distinctly conceived as like man; their power is thought of as greater; they are more supernatural and superhuman, and they are in closer and more constant alliance with their worshippers. Around the gods there gathers a growing *mythology*; but this development is not purely religious. Imagination and intellect are here active beyond the necessities and impulses of religion. It would be quite a mistake, therefore, to assume that the religious life is determined by the mythology. Only a few of the ideas therein expressed are religiously operative. As the intellectual development advances, there is further a tendency to conceive the divine as unity; but to this question we must at a later stage of the discussion return.

(v) As man conceives of life, so will he conceive the good to be gained, or the evil to be shunned, by the help of the gods or spirits. In the earliest stages of development man was primarily concerned about meeting his bodily wants; what he sought was *natural goods*. But as his social relations developed and his moral conscience advanced, he would seek a *moral good* as well as natural goods. The tribal deity was the guardian of the tribal custom, as well as the protector of the tribal existence. There has been a great deal of profitless writing about the relation of morality and religion, because the discussion has been too abstract. If we keep our eye on the concrete reality of life, and see how in human development its range expands and its content increases, first the natural, next the social, then the moral, we shall understand how at first religion seems to subserve only natural goods, and how only slowly it comes to be allied with the moral good. As we shall afterwards see, in the highest stage morality is inseparable from religion.

(vi) However man conceive the end of his life, for its attainment he feels his need, and so seeks the aid of the spirits

or gods. What means does he use to secure their favour or to avert their displeasure? Prayer and sacrifice are the means recognised in all religions. It is held by some thinkers, however, that either *magic* preceded, or may be regarded as a supplement to, these means. In his *magic* man believed himself to be able to bring about such changes in the world around as he desired; he believed that he could raise the wind, bring down the rain, or make his fields fruitful by the use of such means as seemed appropriate to him—*e.g.* sprinkling the ground with water in imitation of the desired rain. Only when he discovered that his powers were limited did he invoke higher powers, and so replaced magic by religion. In the same way it is held as man discovers that science gives him a greater control over Nature than prayer or sacrifice ever could, will he discard religion in turn. With this question Jevons has dealt fully, and has shown that magic and religion are not so related to one another; but that magic may be regarded as the primitive applied science.[1] Where magical practices continue in a religion as a means of coercing the gods to do man's bidding, this must be regarded as a relapse in the religious development, even as irreligious, because opposed to the fundamental conception of the divine as the higher power on which man depends. Prayer and sacrifice then remain as the distinctively religious acts, however complicated may come to be the ritual which grows up around them. It is only at an advanced stage of development that morality and religion are brought into so close a relation to one another that the holy life comes to be regarded as the sacrifice that is acceptable unto God.

(vii) What are the emotions which are distinctive of religion? The saying has come down to us from antiquity that *fear made the gods*. It has been maintained, on the contrary, that confidence and even affection are characteristic of the worshipper towards his god. Such contradiction is due to a too abstract standpoint. The

[1] *An Introduction to the History of Religion*, chap. iv.

environment and the circumstances of the worshipper would largely determine his emotions. A nature apparently hostile would awaken fear; a nature manifestly beneficent would kindle hope. Where the deities are conceived as for the most part unfriendly, the explanation probably is that either natural or tribal conditions made life hard and dangerous. Even where prayer or sacrifice is offered to avert divine displeasure, there is the assumption that the deities can be won over. The sentiment, whether painful or pleasurable, may survive the conditions that evoked it, and so we must not look for a constant correspondence. The remembrance of help divinely given before might sustain trust and hope of deliverance in the most adverse circumstances. The religious life is far too variable and complex for such one-sided statements about the emotions peculiar to it. In religion there is experience of the divine presence. The worshipper feels himself in the presence of, or even possessed by, his god. The feeling may be one of awe and terror, or of exaltation. However artificial may be the means used to produce such ecstatic conditions, we cannot dismiss as altogether unreal the sense of the divine which the worshipper may sometimes possess.

(viii) There is a belief so closely related to the belief in gods that the two beliefs have been treated as identical: the belief in ghosts, or the survival of the dead. Herbert Spencer would explain all religious ceremonies as funeral rites, and Grant Allen traces the god back to the ghost. In the two conceptions there is much in common. The conception of the soul as distinct from the body makes possible the belief that the soul may survive the death of the body. As sleep is a temporary, so death is a permanent severance of the soul from the body. The conception of the spirits, out of which the idea of the gods, as has already been indicated, slowly emerges, is similar, for they are related to material objects and physical changes as the soul is to the body and its movements. But it is not proved that the belief in ghosts preceded the belief in

spirits. As soon as man gained, in whatever way, the rudimentary sense of the distinction of soul and body, he would probably apply it to explain change to Nature around him directly, without the *détour* of belief in ghosts. It is much more likely that he conceived Nature in the likeness of his own living self than of his dead ancestors. His primitive speculation about the world around him would be as early as about his future destiny. What for our purpose must be emphasised, is that the belief in the survival of death arises as spontaneously as the belief in spirits or gods. In the course of religious development the gods are brought into relation to the unseen world as exercising authority there as here, and as thus affecting man's future destiny as well as his present existence. As the deities become moralised, and their rule recognises moral distinctions among men, that life hereafter may be conceived as the scene of moral judgment, as in the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*; and the vague conception of the continued existence of ghosts haunting their old homes may yield to the more definite idea of a separation of good and bad in an abode of bliss or a place of woe. In the course of religious development Kant's three postulates of the practical reason, God, freedom, and immortality, are brought into ever closer relation.

(ix) This description of religion, which is based on the facts of man's religious history, spares us the profitless abstract discussions about the definition of religion and the theories of its origin. In religion, as we have seen, man seeks through prayer and sacrifice to secure the aid of the supersensible, supernatural, and superhuman powers which he conceives as controlling Nature, and so determining his own life, to realise his good, natural, moral, or future, however he may think of it. The earliest form of religion most imperfectly discloses its nature, which is displayed only in its progressive evolution, and it is a fallacy to offer an account of the alleged primitive religion as a theory of its origin, Religion is one of man's responses to the world around him, and it is no more to

be identified with its earliest form than is man's science and morality, or to be discredited by its lowly origin than these are.

(4) All that the psychology of religion can do is to show what are the factors, intellectual, emotional, volitional, in the activity of the personality as religious; what are the conditions and stages of the development of the religious consciousness. It can answer the questions what and how, but it cannot say why. With the value of religion *the philosophy of religion* is concerned. That philosophy must deal with religion as one element in man's complex life, it must show how it has influenced morality and the evolution of society, how it has affected culture and civilisation, and how it has been related to knowledge in science or philosophy, and must estimate whether it has been a helpful or a harmful force in human progress.

(i) The estimate of the Epicurean Lucretius that religion was responsible for many and great evils,[1] is not prevalent to-day. Positivism, hostile to Christianity, recognises the need of religion for social morality; and Benjamin Kidd, whose method of stating his case is open to serious criticism, has laboured to prove that it is religion which gives altruism the victory over egoism, and that this is the condition of social progress.[2] Something has already been said as to the influence of religion on morality, and any unprejudiced consideration of the course of European history will establish the conviction that, despite all the errors of organised Christendom in clinging to old moral conventions when the moral spirit had advanced beyond them, the Christian ideal and motive has been a potent instrument in moral progress. One need not exaggerate the superstition and corruption of the pagan ancient world, or ignore the purifying and ennobling influence of ancient philosophy, to be convinced that the moral difference between ancient and modern society is mainly due to the leaven of Christianity. The transformation that is taking place all over the

[1] 'Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.'—*De Rerum Natura*, i. l. 102.
[2] *Social Evolution* and *Principles of Western Civilisation.*

world in savage races under the activity of Christian missions, although elements of evil mingle with the good, the chaff with the wheat, is in the present confirming the testimony of the past. As a religion becomes more moral it reinforces morality, and so strengthens society, and the tendency in a developing religion is towards a closer alliance with morality. Christianity demands a holy life in the children of the Holy Father, and with its emphasis on love throws the stress on social morality.[1] This Christian ideal Nietzsche as vainly as arrogantly challenges. Here is not needed any detailed proof of the inspiration religion has given to art and literature. The value of religion here is not seriously challenged; but we are confronted with a more serious problem when we face the relation of religion to science or philosophy.

(ii) If, on the one hand, Comte, in the interests of science, and a philosophy developed into a religion based on science, relegated theology to the lowest superseded stage of human evolution, and Spencer to gain freedom to construct a synthetic philosophy in terms of matter-in-motion, with feigned courtesy bowed religion out of the narrow realm of the Known into the boundless region of the Unknowable, some Christian theologians on the other have been foolish enough to oppose Genesis to astronomy, geology, biology, or anthropology as 'science falsely so-called.' The contrast between religion, on the one hand, and science or philosophy on the other hand, is twofold; the habits of mind resulting are different, and the conclusions advanced may conflict. The methods of science, observation, classification, experiment, generalisation, are not those of religion, which are the intuition of the seer, the ecstasy of the worshipper, the submission of the saint. Science aims at being as objective as possible, religion is real only as the objects of faith subjectively affect the believer. Philosophy, too, aims at the objectivity of a rational system, the parts of which are logically connected apart from the wishes and beliefs of the thinker. Here there

[1] See the volume entitled *Christ and Civilisation.*

is less success, however, in rigidly excluding 'the personal equation,' and even in systems such as Spinoza's or Hegel's the personality of the thinker betrays itself. Religion, although in its theology it may move outward to the circumference of a rational system, in its most intense form moves inward to the centre of the human personality in contact and communion with, dependent on, and dominated by the divine. The man of science or the philosopher seeks to master reality by knowledge and reason, the man of religion is mastered by a reality, supersensible, supernatural, which transcends the reality which science explains or philosophy interprets. Science ignores the noumenal, philosophy uses it to rationalise the phenomenal; but in it religion lives, and moves, and has its being. Eminent men of science have been pious Christians; but in most if not all these cases the intellect, so active in the investigation of nature, has not been equally exercised in the interpretation of religion, and the fearless inquirer in the one realm has often acquiesced in the current orthodoxy in the other. Even when the seer or saint does not distrust science, he does not feel at home in it. How often does the philosopher with his logical abstractions, the net in which he thinks he has caught the universe, although much that has most value for religion and morality has slipped through its meshes, stand aloof from, and in some cases even assume an attitude of too conscious superiority to, the moral purposes and the religious aspirations of men living intensely and strenuously. This intellectual detachment from the emotional stress and the volitional strain of life is not an advantage, but a defect, when not this or that aspect of reality is to be apprehended in thought, but when the total reality is to be appreciated in its worth, and appropriated in its aim. Morality in the good it seeks, and religion in the good it has found, are approaches to ultimate reality not less, but more vital than those of science and philosophy, and probably give a more immediate contact with that ultimate reality than knowledge can ever give. To assert this is not to be guilty of irrational-

ism, but simply to demand that all the data of life as well as thought must be taken into account in any answer to the last questions of the mind.

(5) If, however, we are to assert the value of religion as well as morality, even for human knowledge, we must be able to maintain the *validity* of the intuitions of religion regarding the ultimate reality. For science and philosophy may reach conclusions regarding what the universe in its primal cause and final purpose is, which are in conflict with the certainty of religion that the divine, however apprehended, is that in which all things are, from which they move, towards which they tend. To reconcile this conflict must be the function of *the philosophy of theism* which it seems to the writer desirable to distinguish from the *philosophy of religion*, reserving to the latter the proof of the subjective value of religion as a factor in human experience and development, and assigning to the former the evidence for the objective validity of the conception of the divine for the interpretation of the universe as a whole. It is quite evident that as it is not the task of the philosophy of religion to assert the value of any religious belief, rite, and custom, but to separate the accidental from the essential in religion, and to vindicate only the latter, so it is not the function of the philosophy of theism to claim for every conception of the divine that it is true, but to follow the process of self-criticism in the development of theism, and to subject to a strict criticism even the outcome of that process in the idea of God in the Christian religion. But to this duty we must return in a subsequent chapter (Chapter VI.).

(6) We have so far endeavoured to treat religion as a unity; but it need hardly be said that this is a unity in variety. The religion of savages can be described by the general term animism, and shows great similarities in belief, rite, and custom, but in the course of human development in the peoples who have advanced in culture and civilisation, religion has changed its forms; polydaemonism is superseded by polytheism, a mythology is enshrined

in the literature as in Egypt, Assyria and Babylon, and India. In a few cases a more thorough transformation has taken place under the dominating influence of a great personality, as in the Buddhism of India, the Zoroastrianism of Persia, the Mohammedanism of Arabia, the Confucianism of China. Some religions are literary, in possessing sacred scriptures; a few are historical as well in the sense of showing a record of development, the action of a person or persons. Although the object of religion—the divine—is eternal, the subject of religion—man—is affected by temporal conditions, and so history and religion are brought into close alliance. It is quite impossible to regard the historical form of the religions which have such records of progress as accidental, for the conception of the divine itself is vitally related to the person and work of the founder of the religion, and the piety of the professors of the religion attaches itself immediately to the founder. When in a subsequent chapter we come to deal with the historical reality of Jesus Christ, it will be necessary to consider more closely this connection of religion with history.

(7) There is an assumption in all religion, the significance of which has not been adequately appreciated by Christian Apologists. In their zeal to prove the value of the Christian revelation, they have failed to acknowledge fully that all religion as sincere implies revelation as real. In the beliefs, rites, customs of all religions there is much that is merely traditional and conventional; and probably the majority of the professors of a religion seldom, if ever, get beyond such a remote relation to the object of worship. But religion at its core is more than this, and the more devout worshippers seek more than this. Some contact and communion with, some communication from or possession by the deity worshipped is sought. In totemism by partaking of the sacred flesh of the animal that as a class is the deity of the tribe, the tribesmen seek to renew the common life of god and worshipper. In the exercises to bring about trance or ecstasy there is the endeavour to come into

immediate relation to the divine. This mystic element, if, failing a better word, we must so describe it, is vital to religion. If religion be a mutual relation of divine and human, of deity and worshipper, the divine must participate in it as well as the human, the deity must respond in gifts to the prayers or sacrifices of the worshipper. Religion would be utter illusion if man in his religion is simply projecting himself into, satisfying himself with, the void of his own imagination and desire. *Religion necessarily implies revelation.*

II

(1) In the religious consciousness man is aware of the world, himself, and God. Of himself he has a direct knowledge in his self-consciousness; he is a self only in the measure that he thus knows himself. Of the world he has a mediated knowledge through his senses, and what his mind makes of the data of sense. What is his knowledge of God? If world and self are for him real, so he believes God to be real. But if he knows himself in his own activities, if he knows the world through the effects in his sensations of its changes and movements, does he not also know God as real, because active mediately in the world around him, and more directly in his own religious impulses and aspirations? It takes the sophisticated logician to conceive, and the sophisticated rhetorician to demonstrate, that while self and world are real and active, God neither is nor acts. Man does not know God apart from self or world, yet he distinguishes God from both. There is an impulse, native to religion, to raise the divine above the natural and the human. The degeneration of religion has always been when God was conceived too exclusively from the standpoint of world or self. The advance of religion has been secured by a purification and elevation of the conception of the divine above the merely natural or human. How could man so rise above himself and his world to think of God as greater, mightier, wiser, better than all he found

within or without, unless God Himself was a present reality to his consciousness, self-communicative to his mind or spirit ? Man can know God only as God makes Himself known. For to treat man's knowledge of God as an idealisation of himself only does not explain how man is able so to stretch above his own stature ; and to treat his dependence on, or submission to, God as a confidence in himself, or an obedience to himself, is to make what meets his needs, comforts his sorrows, and rescues him from his distresses a self-mockery. To interpret God in terms of self or world only is to treat religion not as true but as fictitious, and so to deny its truth, worth, or claim. Religion is an illusion unless revelation be a reality.[1]

(2) We must insist that this revelation is *permanent* and *universal.*

(i) We dare not say in view of the permanence and the universality of religion in the history of mankind, that in any age or in any land God has left Himself altogether without witness. There is in man, always and everywhere, the impulse to seek and to find God in the world around or in his own soul ; and it is God Himself who inspires the aspiration, to which He then gives the satisfaction. Man's receptivity for, and responsiveness to, this activity of God varies with the manifold and changeful conditions of his thought and life. The conception of the divine is conditioned by his apprehension of the meaning of the world, and his appreciation of the worth of himself. We may, if we are foolish enough, ask the vain question : Why was mankind not made perfect in knowledge, morality, and religion ? But accepting the fact of evolution, the gradual progress of mankind, it is no more a reproach to religion that the truth about God has been reached only through many mistakes and errors, than it is to science or morality that their progress has been so slow along what seem now so devious paths. In religion as well as morality we see, even more than in knowledge,

[1] See the writer's article on 'Revelation' in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, Extra Volume, pp. 321-36.

aberrations and perversions, the more offensive to us because of the value of that which is thus misrepresented.

(ii) In the sacred scriptures of the different literary religions the claim is advanced that God has spoken to man, and that in these writings God's message is enshrined. The founders of the great religions claimed to have received a word of truth for their fellows. Even Gautama, in whose religion the gods of the native religion play no part, claims the discovery of a secret of salvation, for the communication of which he is entitled the Buddha, or Enlightener. How impossible it is in the highest concerns of the soul for the mind to confine itself within the rigid circle of the human is shown by the later developments of Buddhism, where the man Buddha becomes a supernatural being. Prosaic and unspiritual as in many respects Confucius was, yet he believed himself to be doing the will and interpreting the mind of Heaven in his teaching. Man cannot rest in any truth as ultimate in the concerns of the soul unless he believes that it comes from the ultimate reality.

(iii) The Holy Scriptures of the Christian faith concede the reality of a wider revelation of God to man. To confine our illustrations to the New Testament only, Jesus sees the care and bounty of the Heavenly Father in the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, and He gladly and thankfully welcomes all tokens of Gentile faith. The writer of the Fourth Gospel in his Prologue takes up the Old Testament doctrine of the Divine Word, Wisdom, or Spirit in the Greek conception of the *Logos*, the self-revelation of God in Nature and man, and declares that that Word has become incarnate in Jesus Christ. When confronted with a simple paganism, Paul at Lystra (Acts xiv. 15-17) appeals to God as the Maker, and to the evidence of His rule in the rains and fruitful seasons filling men's hearts with food and gladness. To the more intellectual audience at Athens (xvii. 22-31) he develops an argument against idolatry from God's immanence and man's affinity to God. In his survey of the Gentile world in Romans i.-ii., he traces back its moral depravity and religious degradation

to a wilful ignorance of God, and a consequent wilful perversion of the worship and service of God. In Galatians (iv. 1-9) he seems to see in the pagan world as in Judaism a preparation for the Gospel. The comparative study of religions confirms this conviction of religion, that not only is there the movement of mankind towards God, but that in that very movement God has been approaching man.

(3) Christian Apologists have sometimes tried to show that Christianity is true by seeking to prove that all other religions are false. Such a defence is not only logically weak, as it is more difficult to secure credence for one religion if all other religions are declared untrustworthy; but it is inconsistent with the gracious spirit of the Christian faith. A religion for which God is love must deal very lovingly with all endeavours of the spirit of man to find God. The recognition of the permanence and universality of the divine revelation, as the necessary condition of any value and validity in human religion, does not shut out, however, the claim that there has been also a special revelation unique in its significance and value for the human race. The justification for such a claim may be briefly sketched.

(i) It would seem that for excellence in any human pursuit concentration of effort and consequent limitation of interest were necessary. It is therefore not inherently improbable that one nation should be more concerned about the things of the spirit than another, even that in one nation there should be such predominance of religion as marked it out from all other peoples. It is generally conceded that in the life of the Hebrew nation religion filled a larger place than in the life of any other nation. Its prophetic succession was the one distinction that among the other nations excelling it in the manifold gifts of culture, and arts of civilisation, it could claim. If it be said that it was endowed with a unique genius for religion, that does not dispose of the claim that it enjoyed a unique revelation, for, as has already been shown,

religion implies revelation; it involves a contact with and communication from God such as no other human pursuit does; the greater the human receptivity of religion the greater the divine communicativeness of revelation.

(ii) Yet when we look more closely at the history as it is unfolded in trustworthy records, what we do find is not so much a spontaneous interest in, and a voluntary concentration on, religion, as a constraint of divine providence, and an influence of teachers conscious of being God's messengers, which kept the people, prone to stray, in this narrow path of the divine appointing. The religion of any people is affected by the manifold conditions of its life; the thought of God is determined by the knowledge of self and world possessed; and there has been a tendency in many religions to decadence rather than to progress. In the Hebrew nation we find this same tendency under the same influences; but it is counteracted in the two ways already indicated, in historical events and prophetic monitions.

(iii) It is not at all unreasonable to accept the account that the religion gives of itself. The people in its highest minds regarded itself as chosen and called, guided and guarded, taught and trained by God for His own ends. That God's method with all nations should not be uniform, but show the variety of selection of one people for one function, and another for another, cannot be said to be inherently improbable. If the modern conception of society as organic is applied, as it may be legitimately, to humanity, we may think of the different nations as members of the one body with varying functions. If there be a divine teleology in human history, it is not incredible that this one nation should be elected by limitation of its interest and concentration of its effort, so to develop religiously as to become a less impeded channel than any other for the divine communications which would ultimately benefit all mankind.

(iv) In the development of this people we can trace a religious progress which means a *progressive revelation*.

When, as is often done, sayings from other sacred writings are set side by side with the teachings of the Old and the New Testament, with the intention by such a comparison to minimise the superiority of this religion to others, what we are entitled to offer in reply is the challenge to show in the history of any other religion such a progress. No sacred books record such a history of divine dealing in providence, and divine teaching in prophecy in any other nation, as does the Old Testament. As the writer reads this record, making no assumption of inspiration for it, accepting all assured results of biblical scholarship in regard to it, he becomes more and more impressed with the reasonableness of the standpoint that the course of events in the history of the nation was God's providence for it, and that the interpretation of these events by the prophets was God's own communication of His mind and will in mercy or in judgment. Sometimes the divine teleology may be marked out with a greater minuteness than can now appear to us probable. But it is deeply impressive to see one great empire after another brought into contact with this small nation, not only affecting its outward fortunes, but by the prophetic mediation its moral and religious development. How far that process in its two-fold aspect of providence and prophecy is to be regarded as strictly supernatural we must in the next chapter inquire; for the present argument it is enough to insist that this religious progress, and its corresponding progressive revelation, is unique.

(v) This movement has a goal: the consummation of the Old Testament religion and revelation is in Jesus Christ. In His assurance of being the Son of God religion finds its fulfilment; in His certainty of the Fatherhood of God revelation has its completion. Through His truth and grace men are not only made certain that God is Father, but are also assured that they may become the children of God, for He as Saviour delivers them from the bondage of their sin, the hindrance to their life as the children of God, enjoying His Fatherly love. The personality of

Jesus Christ morally and spiritually so transcends even the previous progress towards Him, that if we are entitled to regard the process as unique, He Himself stands alone and above all other men as the personal revelation of God who has no peer. When through the presentation of Jesus in the gospels we come into His spiritual presence, and see Him face to face, He so impresses our souls that His certainty that He was the Son of God, revealing God as Father unto man, appears supremely reasonable, and His assurance that we may become the children of God seems entirely credible. Before we have formed any doctrine of His person or His work, He makes His impression upon us.

(vi) The significance and value of the New Testament for us lies in this: that in these writings the personal impression of Jesus comes to us fresh and deep, and, as we yield ourselves to that impression, the interpretation of Him by some of those who were so impressed by Him commends itself to us as just and true. If we find that some of the terminology is borrowed from Jewish or Greek sources, and that some of the logic does not appeal to us as it did to the first readers, yet the reality of what Christ proved Himself to be as Saviour and Lord to these witnesses remains for us, and below their estimate of Him, as we share their experience, we cannot fall. He brings God to us, and us to God, and so for us He is God. That valuation a later chapter (Chapter IV.) must further justify.

(vii) As this revelation claims to be final and sufficient for the present religious life of man, it must be perpetuated and diffused. This is secured by the Holy Scriptures, the record and literature of the revelation, by the Christian Church with its testimony to, and influence for, the Gospel of God's grace, and by the Holy Spirit, whose perpetual presence in, and inexhaustible power to cleanse, enlighten, and renew mankind makes the Scriptures and the Church alike the channels for the currents of the divine truth and grace. In the Christian life the contact and communion with God, which sincere piety has ever sought, which came to the prophets as a special endowment for their vocation,

has become our assured possession. In the Spirit men know themselves to be living in God, and He in them. It is the repetition in every age and in all lands (as the modern missionary records testify) of the experience of salvation in Christ, the continuous renewal of the life in the Spirit in those who yield themselves to Christian influences, which is the perpetual witness that God was, and still is, in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses, and committing unto them the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. v. 19).

(viii) Meanwhile, we make no assumption about the inspiration of the writings in the Bible or the supernatural character of any of the events or the persons in this religious history, which beginning in the first consciousness in the Hebrew nation of an intimate relation to Jehovah as the Covenant-God, was continued in ever clearer spiritual vision by the succession of the prophets, was consummated in Jesus' consciousness of Sonship and revelation of God's Fatherhood, and is still to-day the richest spiritual possession of mankind; but are content now to claim that it may be regarded as a unique revelation of God to man.

(4) There are two questions which modern thought now forces upon us. Does the method of the study of the Bible current to-day allow or forbid such a conclusion, and in what way can we satisfy ourselves as to its soundness? We must briefly consider here the religious-historical method and the theory of value-judgments.[1]

(i) The *religious-historical method* is an extension of the 'Higher Criticism' due to the influence of the idea of evolution in all modern thinking, and to the recognition of the significance of the comparative study of religions for the understanding of Christianity. The challenge of the religious-historical school to the Christian theologian is this: Christianity must be treated as one of the religions

[1] The writer has already written a good deal on both of these subjects, and as the limits of space necessitate a very brief treatment of both here, he may be allowed to refer the reader for a fuller treatment to *The Christian Certainty amid the Modern Perplexity*, pp. 44-63, and pp. 230-321.

of the world, and be studied in no other way than these are. The challenge itself, however, already involves an assumption—namely, that there cannot be any religion so unlike all other religions as to require other categories of thought for its adequate interpretation than the others require. This could be justified only as the conclusion of the comparison of Christianity with other religions, and not as its presupposition. It will be found that this method in its principles, and still more in the application of them, is ever seeking to deny the uniqueness of Christianity, and to assert its resemblance to, or even dependence on, other religions.

(ii) What then are the principles of the method? In the *first place* the sources of the religion in the Sacred Scriptures must be subjected to the same literary and historical criticism as any other writings. To this demand one can give a cordial assent. Just thirty years ago William Robertson Smith was debarred from the discharge of his duties as a professor in the Aberdeen College of the Free Church of Scotland for his advocacy of the 'Higher Criticism' as applied to the Bible; but now the method is accepted without demur in nearly all the theological colleges of not only Scotland, but of the English-speaking world.[1] For it is generally recognised that questions of the date, the authorship, the literary character, and the historical value of the writings included in the Bible can only be satisfactorily dealt with by the exercise of an informed and disciplined judgment on the data offered, and that the answers to these questions reached by this method do not affect the significance or influence of the Bible for morality and religion. This statement does require some qualification. The literary character and the historical value of the writings does affect Christian faith in so far as the historical reality of the progressive revelation, and especially of the revealing Person of Jesus Christ, may be brought into doubt or question by these inquiries. If God did not reveal Himself in the Hebrew nation in His

[1] See the *Life of William Robertson Smith*, by Black and Chrystal.

providence and by His prophets, and if the Word of God was not incarnate in Jesus Christ as a person who lived and taught, died and rose again, as the Gospels testify and the apostolic writings conceive Him to have done, then undoubtedly the object of Christian faith is lost. This conclusion does not, however, necessarily follow from the Higher Criticism, although two assumptions which often accompany the application of the principle do lead in this direction. The first assumption is that whatever savours of the supernatural in the records must be denied, or explained away. This assumption is indeed made quite explicit in the second principle of the religious-historical method, that criticism must be followed by *correlation*, that is, for all events, teachings, and persons the historical antecedents must be discovered ; in other words, any cause outside of or beyond the historical succession must be ignored. How far this demand is legitimate we shall in the next paragraph inquire ; but at this point it must be emphasised that literary and historical criticism by itself does not necessarily lead to any so negative conclusion. The second assumption, closely connected with the first, is that, as the writers in the Bible do record the supernatural, in so doing they display their credulity, and so, even when recording the natural, must be treated with suspicion as more likely to fall into error than to follow after truth. Ancient histories generally are held to be untrustworthy. 'In place of external fact of history,' says Dr. Percy Gardner, 'we have in the last resort psychological fact as to what was believed to have taken place.'[1] The modern critic accordingly often claims sovereign freedom in dealing with those ancient authorities for past history. He rejects this statement, and selects that ; he combines his data as seems good in his own eyes ; he reconstructs the history so that it becomes entirely different from what it was in the original sources. One may urge that the opposite course is more likely to lead to truth ; neither credulity nor suspicion, but acceptance of what is credible and intelligible

[1] *A Historic View of the New Testament*, p. 8.

to begin with, and from that standpoint a judgment of the trustworthiness of the writer as a whole, inviting at least suspense of judgment regarding what in his record seems at first improbable. However strongly some higher critics assert their objectivity, one cannot escape the impression that their judgment is subjective as affected by these two assumptions. In the fourth chapter, dealing with the historical reality of Jesus Christ, it will be necessary to go into this matter more fully. To this general discussion of the Higher Criticism one consideration may here be added. Before assuming that the writers in the Bible must be as untrustworthy as ancient historians are by many critics assumed to be, it might be worth while to ask whether the writers, studied without prejudice, do make so unfavourable an impression; whether the recorders and the interpreters of a religion that assigned so supreme a value to objective certainty and subjective sincerity, to truth outward and inward, are likely to have been so careless about fact and proof as they are assumed to have been? The probability seems to be all the other way.

(iii) The second principle, already mentioned, must now be more fully considered. Christianity, and Jesus Christ Himself, must be put into the historical context. The idea of evolution, so fruitful in ordering the data of our knowledge in other realms, must be applied here also. Not only must all events be caught in the network of causality, but all the persons must be explained as far as possible by heredity and environment. Beliefs, rites, and customs in the Christian Church must all be traced to similar expressions of the religious life in Judaism or Paganism. Originality must be minimised, and continuity must be asserted. One cannot be too grateful for what modern scholarship is doing for the reconstruction of our knowledge of the world into which Christianity came. It is no interest of Christian faith to represent Christ as unrelated to the religious thought and life of His age, for it holds that He came in 'the fulness of the times' (Gal. iv. 4), and that

the *præparatio evangelica* was much wider than Judaism. The view of religion and of revelation here advocated enables us to estimate on their own merits the language and even the thought said to be borrowed by the writers of the New Testament from Jewish or Pagan sources; it is not necessarily false because of its source, as it is not necessarily true because of the use made of it. It is quite intelligible that the thought and language-forms of a religion claiming universality should be derived from many sources, while the forms do not fully account for the new content now given to them. So far the application of the principle of correlation is not only permissible, but in the highest degree desirable; what we must guard against is excess. When the teaching of Jesus is reduced to a mosaic of Jewish thoughts, we have the mechanical idea of evolution, which has proved inadequate even in the realm of Nature, applied to a realm where it is altogether out of place. The scientific conception of causality is an exact equivalence between antecedents and consequents, but it excludes just that conception of power that accounts for change. Still less capable is it accounting for progress. Evolution is being conceived to-day quite differently: the state of the universe to-day is not the exact equivalent of its state yesterday; there is constant movement, change, and advance. Evolution must be thought of as *epigenesis*; new factors and fresh features emerge. Life is not merely the equivalent of chemical and physical changes. Thought is not only the resultant of brain processes. So in history there is originality as well as continuity. Even the genius is not reducible to his heredity and environment. We have no adequate data for determining the limits of variability in even human personality; still less does the idea of evolution, which is a description of the creative process, fix the bounds within which the creating power that is in the creative process must be confined. Bergson's conception of *creative evolution* marks a departure in thought, and carries us beyond the mechanical view, which, while being discarded in science, still survives in some of the applica-

tions of this second principle of the religious-historical method.

(iv) The third principle of the method is *comparison*, and the assertion of it is due to the recognition of the interest and importance of the comparative study of religion. In the beliefs, rites, and customs of Christianity, where connection with other religions cannot be established, such resemblances must be sought for as will justify the assertion that this religion is not unique, but only one of the many expressions of man's religious spirit displaying its common features. The unity of mankind is undoubtedly displayed in religion; and we can only welcome all the evidence that can be found to illustrate that unity. Christian theology will be greatly enriched, if it abandons the 'insular' policy, and adopts the 'continental'; if instead of considering doctrine only as presented in the Holy Scriptures, it will seek all the light that the working of the human mind on these ultimate problems in other religions can throw upon them. Against the principle of comparison there is no objection. But there is a wrong and a right application of it. It is curious to discover how old errors reappear as new truths. The elder dogmaticians are blamed for collecting the proofs for a doctrine from the whole range of Scripture, detaching texts from their contexts, and so imposing on them a meaning other than the original. But exactly the same fault can be charged against those scholars who gather together from all the religions, savage or cultured, all the features of thought or life which appear to have some resemblance. A closer study of each instance in its own context of history and society would often reveal that the resemblance is apparent only. Just as faith does not mean exactly the same mental condition in James, Paul, and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, so the sacrificial meal of the Aztecs is not identical in moral and religious content with, though it has superficial resemblances to, the Christian Eucharist. It is surely as scientific to distinguish differences as to recognise resemblances The comparison of religions

should be *organic* and not *atomic*. We really learn nothing of the value or the validity of the Christian faith by learning that this or that belief, rite, or custom in the Christian Church bears resemblance to some feature of another religion. Not only does resemblance not prove derivation, but it does not even show equivalence, moral or religious. To assert derivation there must be probable historical connection, and not merely conjecture, as in the attempt to account for the story of the Nativity by Buddhist parallels. The Christian religion as a whole in its distinctive religious disposition and moral character, in its actual historical effect, should be compared with the religions as a whole which are its rivals. The survivals of *animism* in the popular beliefs within Christendom do not prove that Christianity has only the significance and value of a savage religion. If we compare Buddhism or Islam as a whole with Christianity as a whole, or, still more, Gautama or Mohammed in moral character and religious spirit with Christ, it is not the likeness, but rather the difference requiring to be accounted for which will most impress us.

(5) The standard of judgment in any comparison of religions must be appropriate. It is as religions that they must be compared, how far they do realise the end of religion; and as morality is so closely related to religion, and becomes more closely related in religious development, the comparison cannot ignore their moral influence. It is moral and spiritual tests that must be applied. Accordingly it is a *judgment of value* that must be pronounced. Without entering in any detail into the discussion of this thorny theme, in regard to which the writer has been compelled to defend the Ritschlian school against what he regards as the misconceptions of some eminent British theologians,[1] the truth in the theory must be insisted on. In the realm of morality and religion as in that of art, we are concerned with judgments which not only affirm that an object is, but also declare what value the object has

[1] See the *Ritschlian Theology*, second edition, pp. 161-93, and pp. 407-14: also the *Christian Certainty*, pp. 230-78.

for us, not as affording us a merely subjective gratification, but as fulfilling the requirements of an objective ideal of beauty, goodness, truth.

(i) These judgments do not even implicitly deny the existence of the object, but assume it; and so there is no opposition of judgments of value and judgments of existence. Existence is assigned to which quality is ascribed. Men do not trouble themselves about the value of what for them is non-existent. The Ritschlian would not waste his labour in showing on what grounds the predicate of divinity is assigned to Jesus Christ, if in so doing he intended to express the belief that Christ is not divine. The evidence for the divinity of Christ offered by the Ritschlian school may, or may not, be sufficient; the conception of the divine held may, or may not, be adequate—neither of these questions now concerns us—but that the intention—intelligent and honest—to confess Christ as divine is not disproved because the judgment is described as one of *value* is what is here contended for.

(ii) Again, the standard of value is not subjective, but objective. Just as no Ritschlian would consider that an action was to be judged right because it so pleased the moralist to consider and pronounce it, so neither would he hold Christ divine merely because it pleases the Christian for his own assurance of salvation so to consider Him. The need that Christ meets is a real need rooted in the reality of both man and his world, and the salvation that Christ offers is a real salvation; and so the divinity ascribed to Christ because He offers this real salvation from this real need, and makes His offer good, is as real. A merely subjective estimate about the person of Christ could not guarantee an objective deliverance.

(iii) It never entered into the mind of Ritschl or any of his followers to suppose that the value-judgment gives existence to its objects; that Christ's divinity is constituted and not merely recognised by the value-judgment. Some of its idealist critics blame Ritschlianism for being a *historic positivism*. Be the charge true or not, it at least

corrects the suggestion that the *value-judgments* are not concerned with reality. The historical reality of the revelation of God in Christ is assumed; and the *value-judgment* seeks to show how that reality is apprehended.

(iv) As the subsequent chapters will show, the writer himself is not disposed to use the theory of value-judgments as the short cut to Christian certainty. He does not regard it on the one hand as a substitute for the necessary historical inquiry regarding the reality of the object of Christian faith—Jesus Christ—as fact, nor does he treat it, on the other, as an escape from the obligation to strive for a metaphysic which will give to Christian faith its appropriate intellectual context; but he does hold that we must insist that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, that scientific knowledge, and logical understanding, and speculative reason do not themselves give moral insight or spiritual vision. A man must be living the religious life to be able to test what is or what is not religious truth. We do not take a bad man's judgment on morals; how can the man, indifferent to religion, who has not had the religious experience of God's saving grace in Christ, pronounce an opinion worth having on the question whether God has revealed Himself in Christ in the history that prepared for Him, and the history of which He has been the source? Whether there is recorded and interpreted in the Holy Scriptures the revelation of unique significance, supreme value, absolute authority, and final sufficiency, is a question which neither historical learning nor philosophical insight can answer, but only the personal experience of God's coming into contact and communion with the soul in Christ.

(v) This does not mean that men must wait until in some mysterious way beyond their control this experience becomes theirs. Christianity may, and ought to be, approached by the way of historic inquiry, but along this path alone what at most can be gained is surely a judgment of probability. Weighing the evidence for and against the historical reality of Jesus as represented in the gospels,

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a man may reach the conclusion that it is more likely than not that Jesus was as He is represented. Christianity must not refuse the test of philosophical insight. It has been so proved by many minds, and they have reached the judgment that it offers a more reasonable world-view on the whole than any of its rival theories; but this is at best a speculative opinion. A religious comparison may be made between Christianity and other faiths, although it is difficult here to fix the standard of judgment. One derived from Christianity itself begs the question. One drawn from some other source may prejudice the inquiry against Christianity from the very start. Further, can any religion be fully known unless from within? Suppose the comparison be made, all it can result in is the conclusion that Christianity is relatively best. So Troeltsch refuses the Christian the right of speaking of Christianity as the absolute religion.[1] These all may be ways of approach to Christ, and *Christian Apologetics* must keep them all open, and give all the guidance on them it can, but the judgment of value which brings assurance to the soul can only follow on the faith that finds God's saving grace in Christ.

[1] See *The Christian Certainty*, pp. 52-7.

CHAPTER III

INSPIRATION AND MIRACLE

I

(1) In the preceding chapter it has been shown that religion is universal in mankind, and necessary to manhood, and that religion by its very nature, as a relation of man to God, implies the correspondent relation of God to man—revelation. It has also been argued that the revelation is as permanent and universal as the religion to which it corresponds, but that this fact does not exclude the possibility, nay, admits the reality, of a unique revelation in which a greater human receptiveness corresponds with a greater divine communicativeness. In regard to this special revelation it was further maintained that the legitimate application of the religious-historical method to it does not disprove its uniqueness; but that the apprehension of the truth and the appreciation of the worth of this special revelation involves not only a theoretical judgment but a value-judgment. So far we have not attempted a closer analysis of the conception of revelation beyond recognising that as religion involves the exercise of human personality, so does revelation the activity of God in nature and in history. How is this activity of God to be conceived? Before we try to answer that question, we may ask another: How has this activity been conceived? For it is well here to allow speculation to wait on and be guided by experience. It has been usual for Christian Apologists to present only the biblical doctrine; but in accordance with the standpoint here assumed the writer will examine the testimony of religion generally.

(2) We must go back to the simplest conceptions we can reach.

(i) It is generally agreed that all religions have passed through the stage of *animism* in their thought, although animism is both less and more than religion: less as only the theoretical and not the practical aspect of religion; more as not merely religion, but as also science or philosophy in a rudimentary form. Probably there was even a simpler form of thought, which may be called *animatism*. Man felt himself and his world alive before he thought of himself as soul inhabiting and controlling body; and of natural objects as possessed by, and physical changes as due to, soul-like beings. Here we have in germ the distinction between material and spiritual, even though the spiritual was spoken of in terms of the material; between the phenomenal and the noumenal, between the image and the idea. Instead of regarding the subsequent developments of this conception as the survivals of savage superstition, we may here rather recognise a fundamental necessity of human reason, which later knowledge and thought may modify so as to bring it into as close accord with the reality to be explained as possible, but cannot banish. The things seen are related to, dependent on, and controlled by the things unseen. When in the evolution of religious thought the spirit becomes the god, he is less confined to, less dependent on, the natural object or the physical change. Instead of individual spirits, we move on to departmental deities. Instead of every tree having its own dryad, there is a goddess of vegetation. Within polytheism there is a tendency towards monotheism. As on the one hand social unity establishes itself in tribe or nation, the worship of many spirits tends towards monolatry, the worship of a tribal deity. As some sense of the unity of nature develops, thinkers at least, even while acquiescing in the popular polytheism, seek for some principle of unity, by the presidency of one god over the others, as of Zeus in Olympus; by an abstract conception of the divine, of which the gods are manifestations, as the Egyptian *nutar*; by a pantheism which merges gods and world alike in one existence, as Brahma in India; by the definite conception of one personal

God in all, through all, and over all, as in the Hebrew 'ethical monotheism.'

(ii) But in this process of thought, while the multiplicity tends to be merged in unity, the idea of power is not abandoned, only one will or power is substituted for a number, and so law and order emerge out of confusion and discord. With the growth of the knowledge of the world and of self the conception of the divine is profoundly modified, but the reality of the divine is no less tenaciously maintained. Comte would dismiss this as the lowest state of human thought, the theological, which must yield to the metaphysical, which in turn must give way to the positive or scientific. But we must observe at what a price Comte purchases his emancipation from the idea of the divine. To sacrifice theology he must mutilate science. He is compelled to get rid of the metaphysical idea of cause even as merely a disguise for the theological idea of God, and has to shut science into the narrow room of observing and classifying the sequences and resemblances of phenomena. The spiritual, the noumenal, the idea, the divine, whatever term may be used for the Unseen which human thought has ever regarded as the explanation of the seen, for him is not. Science may restrict itself to sequences, the equivalence of antecedents and consequents, but in so doing it leaves change unexplained; how a certain set of conditions becomes a different set, that is inexplicable without the conception of causality, power producing change.

(iii) There is a school of scientific thought which, abandoning mechanical atomism as useless and hopeless as an explanation of the universe, has recourse to the principle of the transformation of energy. But how are we to conceive energy so as to account for its changes of form? The philosophical thinker to-day is driven back to the idea that lies in germ in animism. 'The notion of power,' says George Croom Robertson, 'in the conception of cause is got from our consciousness of *being able to put forth activity*, from our consciousness of *volition*. . . . Just as, in regard to movements of my body, I come to consider them

as depending on my will, so I come to conceive there is a similar "causal" power determining other movements in nature.'[1] This is not the sole or even the main reason for the belief in God; what we desire to show now is that the conception of power immanent in nature, and conceived on the analogy of the human will, is one from which even modern thought cannot escape.

(3) How is this power at first conceived? Jevons seeks to show that the spirits in whom man believed were conceived as supernatural. He maintains that even primitive man had the gift of 'faith in the uniformity of nature, the belief that what has once happened will in similar circumstances happen again,' for 'it is a fact of psychology that the native tendency of the human mind to believe that what has once happened will happen again is so strong that, until experience has corrected it, a single occurrence is sufficient to create an expectation of recurrence. The child to whom you have given sweetmeats once, fully expects sweetmeats from you at your next meeting. We may then regard it as certain that from the beginning there were some sequences of phenomena, some laws which man had observed, and the occurrence of which he took as a matter of course, and regarded as natural. . . . It was when the machinery (of nature) did not produce its usual results that he was astonished,' and 'he ascribed the fault to some overruling *super*natural power. In fine, where the natural ended, the supernatural began. Laws on which man could count, and sequences which he habitually initiated and controlled, were natural. It was the violation of these sequences and the frustration of his expectations by which the belief in supernatural power was not created, but was first called forth.' At this point in his argument Jevons adds this note: 'Since writing the above, I find Waitz says (*Introduction to Anthropology*, p. 368) "that which regularly and periodically recurs passes by unheeded, because, being expected and anticipated, he (primitive man) is not obstructed in his path," and that Major Ellis (*Tshi-*

[1] *Elements of General Philosophy*, p. 144.

speaking Peoples, p. 21), quoting the passage from Waitz, says, " Hence the rising and the setting of the sun and moon, the periodical recurrence of the latter, the succession of day by night, etc., have excited no speculation in the mind of the negro of the Gold Coast. None of the heavenly bodies are worshipped ; they are too distant to be selected as objects of veneration ; and the very regularity of their appearance impresses him less than the evidences of power and motion exhibited by rivers, the sea, storms, landslips, etc." '[1] It may be questioned whether primitive man at the very beginning was capable of such trains of thought ; but there need be no doubt that at an early stage of human development the difference of the ordinary and the extraordinary, the expected and unexpected, in nature would be recognised. Whether the term supernatural with the definite connotation it has acquired in modern thought, can be applied with strict accuracy to this sense of the unusual may be questioned ; but it is true that here we may find in germ the subsequent development. As man's experience has widened, nature has been more fully brought within the range of his knowledge, and yet he has never quite escaped the presence of the mysterious and inexplicable in his world, the sense of power above and beyond what he already knows.

(4) Must we assume that this sense of the supernatural is but the shadow of man's ignorance of the natural, and that as the knowledge of the natural expands, the sense of the supernatural will contract ? Or is there any other alternative for our thought ? The writer ventures to suggest considerations in support of an alternative, although he knows that in so doing he is going against the intellectual fashions of the age.

(i) The conception of the extraordinary and unexpected is not the final or adequate conception of the supernatural for religious thought, although it may have been a help to the mind by the way. It is characteristic of religion to have a sense of dependence on, submission to, and rever-

[1] *Introduction to the History of Religion*, pp. 17-19.

ence for the divine ; God is thought of as greater, stronger, wiser and better than man. He controls the world that He inhabits, or, in philosophical terms, He is *transcendent* as well as *immanent*.

(ii) If we apply the term natural to describe what is in accord with the order of nature, the physical universe, man himself is supernatural. If we extend the term natural to man to indicate his dependence on heredity and environment, the uniformities of disposition, motive, habit, conduct and character observable in different men, there still remains in every man something that eludes the grasp of nature, a freedom that by controlling and directing the movements of the body affects changes in nature. It might be in accordance with the natural that the charge of gunpowder should explode when the spark is applied to it, but the movement of the hand that applied the spark, as free, could not with strict accuracy be described as merely natural. When the natural is limited to the mechanism of nature, man's free action cannot be described as natural without an extension of the meaning of the term. But, allowing even that man's free action could be correctly so described when his action is marked by the observed uniformities of human conduct, are there not human acts even in which the spirit so triumphs over the flesh, conscience over impulse or custom, originality over routine, that we should feel we were abusing the term by describing them as natural ? Even in human history we meet with the unexpected and inexplicable.

(iii) We cannot conceive God's relation to nature otherwise than on the analogy of the relation of our will to the movements of our body. As, in spite of all the sophistry of philosophers, we refuse to regard our actions as necessitated, so must we refuse to think of God's activity in nature as bound and not free. It is true that much of our activity is habitual, in compliance with customs already fixed. We have formed a certain character, in accordance with which, in so far as they know it, others will expect us to act. But there may be moral crises, in

which custom does not hold us, and even character does not determine our path, but the personality asserts itself in a spontaneity and originality which is a surprise to ourselves as well as to others. Those who knew Saul the Pharisee and the persecutor would never have expected to find him in the midst of the Christian community. The writer fully recognises the danger of unduly straining the argument from analogy, but here it seems to be strengthened by the *a fortiori* argument. If man even is not bound by custom and character in his action, how much more is God not bound by His habitual method of action, which we call the order of nature, since He is both transcendent and immanent. If we think of nature as a power beside God, the supernatural must be conceived as God's interference with, and triumph over, nature. But if we think of God, as religion thinks of Him, as constantly and directly active, what is the order of nature but His method of action, and its uniformity but His constancy; and any apparent departure from it, so long as it can be seen to be for higher ends, only that originality which we may expect where there is liberty? If men habituate themselves to think in terms of mechanism, the supernatural must appear incredible; if they will think, as the religious man to be consistent should think, in terms of personality, the supernatural will be as credible as the natural, because both express divine personal liberty. A man's character does not suffer from his exceptional action in a crisis, and the new, morally and religiously, takes up into itself the old; so God's supernatural action need not be conceived as interfering with or disturbing His natural activity, for in both there is the unity of one and the same will. There is a latent atheism in much of the denial of the supernatural in contemporary thought.

(iv) The theory of evolution is now generally accepted; but there is a false and a true conception of evolution, the one contradictory of, and the other consistent with, religion and its necessary belief in God. The mechanical view of evolution, as it is presented to us in Herbert

Spencer's 'synthetic philosophy,' is false, and can be shown to be false even as an explanation of the world. Mental can be resolved into organic processes as their equivalents, and organic into chemical or physical processes only by ignoring the differences. Mind transcends, and is not the equivalent of life, and so life transcends and is not the equivalent of matter. In the process of evolution the new emerges, and takes its place with the old, and is not merely a disguised repetition of the old. Evolution is *epigenesis*.[1] In the language of religion there are divine initiatives as well as divine constancy. If then at each stage of the evolution nature was receptive of this divine initiative, why need it be supposed that at the present stage of evolution there can be no divine initiatives, and that if there were, the order of nature must needs be disturbed by them? Mr. Bergson has so far avoided any theistic interpretation of his idea of *Creative Evolution*. This idea, however, is not his individual speculation; it is based on scientific knowledge, and is a response to a widely-felt demand for a more adequate conception of evolution than the mechanical. In so far as it is true, it strengthens the view here maintained that God's action is free because *progressive*.[2]

(v) The recognition of evolution, and of progress in

[1] See Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism* and *The Realm of Ends* for the best discussion of this problem.

[2] The writer does not feel any need of altering or withdrawing the above argument in view of the expression by the President of the British Association of the expectation that life would yet be produced artificially in the laboratory out of the non-living; for (1) this is but a conjecture, to which a school of biologists, the vitalists, is still opposed; (2) the mechanical view of evolution so obsesses the minds of many eminent men of science that here the wish may be regarded as father to the thought; (3) even if living substance could be produced by chemical combinations under physical conditions, discoverable by the man of science, the difference between the living and non-living would not thereby be abolished, for both the qualities and the behaviour of the one are so different from those of the other, that the emergence of life in the world would mark a fresh stage of the evolution; (4) if life were produced artificially in the laboratory, it would be by a mind knowing and effecting the necessary chemical combinations and physical conditions: and, therefore, unless we assume the irrational view that chance effected in the beginning what science is still trying to effect, a purposing mind and performing will must be assumed. Thus life could still be regarded as due to a divine initiative in the process of evolution.

evolution, removes an objection to the admission of the supernatural which was rooted in the static view of the world. If the world were thought of as a finished article, displaying in its arrangement finally and adequately the wisdom and goodness of its Maker, as the deists thought of it, the natural would set the limits to the exercise of both divine attributes; and any fresh departure must seem incredible. But admit the conception of progress, then no stage can be regarded as so finally and adequately expressing the whole mind and will of God that any new expression would appear incredible. If man marks the goal of animal evolution, mankind is undergoing a process of mental, moral, and religious evolution. It is characteristic of religion not to be content with reality as it is, but to aspire to the ideal. The real, the pious spirit feels, conceals as well as reveals God. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, as well as the proving of things not seen (Heb. xi.). Recognising God both in nature and providence, faith nevertheless begets the hope of the kingdom of God, the perfect manifestation of God in the world and man. For in nature there is physical evil—pain; and in history there is moral evil—sin; and the religious consciousness and moral conscience reinforce one another in the demand and expectation that God's power and wisdom, serving His goodness, will bring the deliverance from both. The *idealism* which pretends that all the real is the rational, or the *optimism* that assumes the actual world the best possible, is neither religious nor moral. The world, as we know it, is not so perfect as to exclude the possibility of the divine wisdom and goodness being more distinctly and directly expressed through the divine power than we now see in the natural order.

(vi) In Christianity and the Hebrew religion which prepared for it we have a special revelation, as was shown in the preceding chapters. It is a progressive revelation, not merely in ideas and ideals through a succession of teachers, but in the discipline and development of a people in a history with a goal in the person of Jesus Christ revealing

the highest idea of God, and realising the best ideal of manhood ever given to man. In the preparatory history there was the hope of salvation, and through Christ the hope was transformed into the experience, for believers in Him, of forgiveness and renewal as children of God. This revelation is *redemptive*, delivering man from sin, and therewith assuring him of deliverance from evil. The Christian still hopes for the perfect manifestation of the kingdom of God, the fulfilment of God's purpose, of which he has already the pledge in his own salvation in Christ. It does not seem at all irrational from this point of view to believe that God, acting freely in nature, should even in the existing order give pledges of that higher order, not only in the forgiveness of sin, but in deliverances from evil and bestowments of good, inexplicable from the knowledge we have of that lower order as it now is.

(5) So far we have been endeavouring to develop the conception of God's free, progressive, redemptive action in nature, which, relatively to our present knowledge of the order of nature, and as inexplicable by it, may be described as supernatural. But how does man conceive God as related to himself? In dealing with the conception of religion in the previous chapter, the writer insisted that the emotional and the practical as well as the intellectual element must be recognised. Mythology on the one hand, or prayer and sacrifice on the other, do not constitute religion, unless there be emotion and the sense of the presence and power of the divine. There is piety only when the divine is felt to be inhabiting and possessing not only the world around, but the self also. This element in religion has been so well described by R. Otto, that his words may be quoted in full: 'From its beginning religion is the experience of the mysterious, and the attraction and inclination to the mysterious, an experience of the same, which breaks through out of the depths of the life of feeling, when externally stimulated and occasioned, as the feeling of the supersensible. But once aroused it becomes one of the mightiest impulses of the human race, which

impels it to a strange and confused history, which tosses it about in what is most grotesque and extraordinary, and yet drives it onward to the pure and the clear. It is an impulse of demonic power which is not explained by the reflex actions of spontaneous products of the phantasy and their imagined values, but which sets itself free out of the region of the most elemental, although quite obscure representation, most secret knowledge, and at the same time most potent interest. And thus alone can be understood its incomprehensible potency over generations and peoples. Without assuming this impulse, and the feeling supporting it, the history of religion cannot be written. It would be a geometry without space. It would be as if one were to busy oneself with writing a history of music while denying an independent musical feeling, and a peculiar musical endowment with the constant labour of interpreting its manifestations as a kind of athletics or gymnastic practice.'[1] Troeltsch, too, recognises that religion as real implies a contact of the human with the divine,[2] and in the lower forms of religion this contact is experienced in an emotional disturbance, in an excitement which passes into an ecstasy or frenzy.[3] God as the supernatural is recognised in nature in *miracle*, and within man in *inspiration*; the immanence of God which, as not bounded by the recognised natural order or the usual mental processes, gives indications of His transcendence, is represented in these two forms, outward and inward. Having endeavoured to define and justify these conceptions in general terms, we must now confine ourselves to the biblical representation.

II

(1) The word *inspiration* itself (*inspiro*, to breathe into) is an instance of the description of mental processes by physical analogies. As the breath is drawn into the lungs

[1] *Theologische Rundschau*, 1910, p. 305.
[2] See *The Christian Certainty*, p. 52, for a fuller statement of his view.
[3] See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, article on 'Inspiration,' for instances in the lower forms of religion.

so the human spirit receives the divine. The same idea is in the Greek word *θεοπνευστία*. As clearly is the divine presence in and possession of the human indicated in the word *ἐνθουσιασμός*. The belief that God can dwell and speak or work in man is almost universal, and many instances from faiths scattered all over the world could be given, but we must here confine ourselves to the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures.[1] The crowning glory of the Hebrew history is the succession of prophets; but even in Israel prophecy had a lowly beginning in abnormal phenomena similar to those found in other religions. Saul treats Samuel as a soothsayer, and seeks to buy guidance for his journey from him (1 Samuel ix. 8); and when Saul is himself found among the prophets, it is a religious frenzy that has seized him, shown probably by violent gestures and inarticulate cries, owing to contact with the bands of enthusiasts for Jehovah and Israel, who were going about the land seeking to arouse the piety and the patriotism of the people (x. 10-13). At Pentecost there was a religious revival of exceptional intensity, and accompanied by abnormal features (Acts ii. 1-13), such as the speaking with tongues, which the author or his source misunderstands as using foreign languages (ver. 8), yet which Paul accurately describes as an unintelligible rush of sounds, expressive of intense feeling, but needing to be interpreted (1 Cor. xiv. 27). Similar phenomena characterised Montanism, appeared at Wittenberg in Luther's absence, accompanied in some places the work of Wesley during the Evangelical Revival, and were witnessed in the Scottish Revival of 1860, and the Welsh of 1905-6. These features may be all psychologically explicable as abnormal phenomena; what does give them religious significance is that there is such an overmastering sense of the divine that not only is there such emotional disturbance, but in many cases personal conversion from sin to God. The invisible, the eternal, the divine becomes a reality for the soul: the writer at least cannot dismiss such experiences as wholly illusive.

[1] See Macculloch's *Comparative Theology*, chap. xv.

(2) The succession of prophets, whose writings have come down to us, and who were the agents of the progressive divine revelation in the Hebrew nation, stands at a higher stage of relation to, communion with, and communication from God than that marked by such emotional disturbance.[1] From their own records it appears that in a state of religious exaltation they saw visions and heard voices; but this mode of divine manifestation was not distinctive of them. Their inspiration, in virtue of which they with authority declared God's mind and will in mercy or judgment on His people, came to them generally in the full exercise of their normal faculties. In their personal intimacy with Jehovah they came to understand His character and purpose as their fellow-countrymen, including the false prophets, failed to do. They were convinced that the history of the nation was directed and controlled by God's providence. By moral insight and spiritual discernment they were enabled to discover both the condition of the people and the intention of God in relation thereto. But they always claim to speak God's revealed word, and not merely their own clever opinions or shrewd guesses. Their interest was withdrawn from the outer world, and their attention was concentrated on their own inner life, and it was under these conditions that intuitions of what God would speak and do arose in their consciousness with a certainty and an authority which for themselves as well as the people warranted their beginning their discourses with such words as 'Thus saith the Lord.' As their declaration of the divine mind and will concerned the future as well as the present, as denunciation of sin was enforced by threats of coming judgment, and as calls to penitence were confirmed by promises of speedy deliverance, prophecy as practical preaching necessarily involved *prediction*. While it is a mistake to regard this as the distinctive feature of prophecy, as Christian theologians used to do, there is just as little warrant in the records for ignoring it as unessential to the work of a prophet. Only by critical

[1] See Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, article on 'Prophecy,' vol. iv. pp. 106 ff.

violence can we get rid of the authentic instances of foretelling in the prophetic writings. Amos and Hosea foretold the fall of Samaria in 722; Isaiah the deliverance of Jerusalem in 701; Jeremiah the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah in 586, and the unnamed prophet, called by the critics Deutero-Isaiah, the return from exile in 537. Unless the prophets are either deceived or deceivers, they were conscious that the future was unveiled to them, not by their own political sagacity, but by God's own illumination. That enlightenment, it is probable, came to them by way of, and not apart from, their moral insight and spiritual discernment. They did interpret outward events by what they knew of God and His purpose; but what gave certainty and authority to all the activities of their own mind and soul was their constant sense of God with and in them. It does not seem to the writer at all incredible or unintelligible that a sure foresight should accompany a clear insight, and that intimacy with God should make possible an anticipation of the course of the fulfilment of His purpose. Be it observed that prediction was conditional; impenitence was threatened with judgment, and penitence was assured of mercy; and thus in this connection there does not emerge the problem of the relation of the divine foreknowledge to human freedom. We must avoid on the one hand an extreme *supernaturalism* which ignores the human mediation of divine revelation, and on the other the not less extreme *naturalism* which sees only human activity in morality and religion, and excludes divine action. Unless we are prepared to declare that God cannot commune and communicate with man, we have no ground for denying the claim the prophets made for themselves.

(3) As has already been indicated, the Apostolic Church was 'filled with the Holy Ghost,' marked by a holy enthusiasm, a sacred inspiration. The abnormal features which are met with elsewhere in religious revival are not absent, and are not depreciated by the writers of the New Testament. But inspiration in a higher form is the mark of the Christian life. The believer is represented in the New

Testament as in intimate communion with God in Christ, and, therefore, as permanently and potently possessed by the Spirit of God. Not a temporary exaltation of the religious emotions, but a permanent transformation of the inner life—the mind enlightened by God's truth, the heart quickened by God's love, the will renewed by God's grace—is the characteristic operation of the Spirit of God. As in the Incarnation, human personality becomes the perfect organ of God's own life, so in the measure of the contact of human faith with divine grace in Jesus Christ does human life become inspired. Whoever is Christ's, has the Spirit of Christ. Whenever in the course of its history Christianity has become traditional, conventional, formal, acceptance of a creed, observance of a ritual, submission to a code, the Christian life has ceased to be so inspired, and dependence on priest and sacrament has taken the place of communion with God in Christ, and so communication of His Spirit to man. But whenever religion has again become genuine personal faith, this inspiration has also become real. Faith in Christ is followed by the experience of the Spirit's presence and power.

(4) It is sometimes maintained that we must distinguish the apostolic inspiration from the inspiration of believers in the Apostolic Age. For their special office it is argued that they must have possessed a peculiar endowment, which gives to their interpretation of the person and work of Christ, as preserved in the New Testament, a final authority for Christian faith. The writer believes that in a personal, moral, and spiritual religion, as Christianity is, the term *office* is quite inappropriate. A vocation, as expressive of personal qualification and consecration, may be recognised ; as in a body there are many members, and all have not the same function (πρᾶξις, Rom. xii. 4). It is the gift possessed that determines the ministry exercised, not the appointment that secures the endowment. We must accordingly conceive the apostolic inspiration as the common Christian inspiration raised to a higher power in the measure of the clearer vision of, closer communion with,

and fuller consecration to Christ as Saviour and Lord. Paul could claim to have the mind of Christ, not because Peter, John, and James had given him the right hand of fellowship (Gal. ii. 9), but because having been crucified and having risen with Christ, to him to live was Christ (Rom. vi. 5, Phil. i. 21). Paul's writings have a significance and value for us such as no writings outside of the New Testament have, because he was so fully and thoroughly Christ's. Applying only moral and religious tests, the writings of the New Testament indicate that the age which was in most immediate contact with the historical reality of Jesus Christ experienced the presence and power of the Holy Spirit as no other subsequent age has. This may have been partly due to the separation of the Church from the world, and its consecration unto Christ. But who can measure how much personal intimacy with the Incarnate Word, or those who had enjoyed that privilege, may have conditioned personal inspiration? Who can deny that the divine purpose in Christ may have included provision of the means for the preservation and diffusion of the impression which the historical reality of Jesus made on sensitive and responsive souls? This, however, must be insisted on, that the inspiration of the New Testament writings is not due to the mysterious endowment of a few choice souls, but must be traced to the inspired life of Christian believers of greater or less intensity according to the moral and religious condition. If the Church of Christ to-day were as a whole cleansed and renewed, so that a like receptivity for the divine truth and grace were secured, who can doubt that the divine activity in the presence and power of the Spirit of God in man would once more be made manifest? For the writer at least it is impossible to hold any other view than that God, as revealed in Christ, is love, that is, is self-communicative; so that for those who receive that revelation, and in the measure in which they receive it, there is not only communion with God, but a communication from God of His own life of truth and grace. According to faith, so is the inspiration of the Christian life.

(5) The Christian Church has claimed inspiration for the whole Bible, even as other religions have for their sacred scriptures. The most extravagant claims Christian theologians have made have been exceeded in Judaism, Islam, and Brahmanism. It is not necessary here to trace the process by which first the Canon of the Old Testament and then that of the New was formed; to all the writings included inspiration was assigned. First ascribed to persons in abnormal states of religious exaltation, then to the prophets as Jehovah's messengers, inspiration was at last transferred to these writings. The New Testament affirms the inspiration of the Old,[1] and the constant use confirms the claim. The writers of the New Testament shared the views of contemporary Judaism. Weber summarises the teaching of the Talmud in the words, 'The holy scripture came to be through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has its origin in God Himself, who speaks in it.' It is not necessary to discuss the various theories of inspiration which have been at various times current in the Christian Church, as it is no part of the task of Christian Apologetics to maintain, defend, or commend these to the modern mind. We must try to state the doctrine in such a way as will make it appear intelligible and credible today. We cannot assert that the inspiration of the Bible means its inerrancy in matters of common knowledge; its science is the popular contemporary opinion; its history is of varying trustworthiness, as it rests, or does not, on contemporary oral traditions or written sources; even as regards doctrine and morals there is a distinct progress recorded in the Old Testament, the later stages correcting the earlier; and the entire Old Testament idea of God and ideal for man are transcended, while fulfilled in the sense of completion in the New Testament. Only mischief has resulted from the attempt to treat Old Testament theology or ethics as finally authoritative in the Christian Church. Even in the New Testament the divine inspiration is con-

[1] Matt. i. 22, xv. 4; Mark xii. 36; Acts i. 16; Rom. iii. 2, ix. 25; 2 Tim. iii. 16; Heb. i. 1; 1 Peter i. 11, iv. 11; 2 Peter i. 21.

ditioned by the receptivity and responsiveness of the human recipient. Thus *degrees of inspiration* must be recognised; but the distinction must be made objectively rather than subjectively. We cannot measure inspiration by psychic states. The nearer any human personality stands to the progressive purpose of God fulfilled in Christ, the higher we may pronounce the inspiration to be. Accordingly we may expect in one kind of literature a fuller inspiration than in another. The prophet or the apostle is the human agent of divine revelation, and for his vocation he is more fully inspired than is, or need be, the historian, who records the dealings of God with the Hebrew nation, or the experiences of the Christian Church, or who transmits the tradition in the primitive Christian community of the teaching and works of Jesus. To the divine revelation as historical, the records in 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, in the Gospels and the Acts are of primary importance; but the writers personally do not display the same degree of inspiration as do prophets or apostles, or supremely Christ, as standing in personal communion with God, and as receiving personal communications of truth and grace from God. In so far as the historians are moved by a religious purpose, and have themselves been influenced by the revelation they record, they are also inspired. But inspiration is always a condition of the soul in relation to God, and can be ascribed to writings only as this condition finds an expression in them. The closer the intimacy, the greater the submission, the deeper the devotion, the fuller is the inspiration. And in the measure in which a man himself has this same life in God, will he appreciate the inspiration of which the Holy Scriptures are the literary channel. The writer cannot more fitly close this discussion than in the words of a pioneer of the Higher Criticism, the late William Robertson Smith: 'God's dealings with His people were always personal. What His prophets and apostles spoke, they spoke because by the Spirit they understood, and would have others to understand, how God was dealing with man.

And if we possess the same spirit, we too shall understand the Word so soon as we place ourselves in the historical position of the first hearers.' 'We are to seek in the Bible, not a body of abstract religious truth, but the living personal history of God's gracious dealings with men from age to age, till at length in Christ's historical work the face of the Eternal is fully revealed, and we by faith can enter into the fullest and freest fellowship with an incarnate God.'[1]

III

(1) Miracle may be distinguished from inspiration as an *outward sensible event* from an *inward moral or spiritual change*. It is true that conversion is sometimes described as a miracle; but it is convenient to distinguish the supernatural action of God in these two aspects, subjective in human experience and objective in the natural order. In the previous section we have discussed the place of inspiration in the special divine revelation; now we must consider more closely the function of miracle. As the words of William Robertson Smith, just quoted, show, God's dealing with men, while personal, was not merely individual, but historical. He dealt with a nation and for a nation through chosen persons, who were the interpreters of the course of national history. From the beginning to the end of the history of the elect nation, there is a recognition of God's providence guiding and guarding, chastising or delivering His people in the course of outward events. In the previous chapter it has been urged that such a divine providence is both credible and intelligible for any believer in a God in all, through all, and over all. This providence is not usually manifested in events which need to be described as miraculous. God is active in the processes of nature and the progress of history, and fulfils His purpose in both. The miracles, in the strict sense of the word, recorded in the Old Testament, are almost wholly confined to the record of the Exodus and the story of

[1] *Lectures and Essays*, pp. 229-31. For a fuller discussion from a more conservative standpoint see Orr's *Revelation and Inspiration*.

Elijah and Elisha. We cannot claim that as regards the first we have any contemporary record, as it is agreed that the sources even of the Pentateuch are of much later date. As regards the second, the compiler of the Book of Kings has evidently, without any verification, incorporated in his narrative current popular traditions. It has been maintained that the series of events connected with the Exodus need not be regarded as supernatural, but may be explained as natural occurrences, the extraordinary feature of which is their coincidence with the prophetic declaration. Such foresight has been shown to be a mark of the prophetic endowment. The character of the miracles assigned to Elijah and Elisha is not such as to inspire our confidence in the popular traditions through which the record has come to us; and we cannot regard them as essential to the prophetic ministry, and as necessary constituents of the divine revelation. Here even the most convinced believer in miracles may be content to exercise a suspense of judgment. A prosaic misunderstanding of poetic hyperbole accounts for the alleged standing-still of the sun in Gibeon (Joshua x. 12-14); some unusual refraction of the sun's rays may be the natural occurrence to be detected behind the record about Ahaz's sundial (2 Kings xx. 11); subjective scruples, fears, doubts may be objectified in the speech of Balaam's ass (Num. xxii. 27 ff.). In these cases even the acceptance of the narrative as historical does not necessitate the admission of a miracle. The modern view, both of the Book of Jonah and of the Book of Daniel, relieves the scholar of any need of explaining the supernatural features. Apart then from the progressive revelation of God to the elect nation, through His providence in the history and His inspiration in the prophets, the Old Testament does not force on us the problem of miracle.

(2) But in the New Testament the problem cannot be evaded. According to the records the ministry of Jesus was marked from its beginning to its close by miracles, and His entrance into and exit from earthly life alike were miraculous. In His healing ministry all manner of diseases

were healed; not only were the demoniacs restored to soundness of mind, the lepers cleansed, the paralysed enabled to move, the lost senses given back to the blind and the deaf, but even the dead were raised. Other extraordinary acts, such as the stilling of the storm, the feeding of five thousand and four thousand, the walking on the sea, the change of water into wine, are ascribed to Him. It is usual to distinguish these *Nature* miracles from those of *Healing*. These acts are presented in the records as extraordinary acts; and in this respect Christ is contrasted with John the Baptist, who wrought no miracle (John x. 41). None is regarded as a natural occurrence, and the wonder excited by them is frequently mentioned. But, on the other hand, these acts are represented as altogether congruous with His Person, His Mission, and His Message. He is Himself supernatural in His sinless, perfect, moral character, and in His religious consciousness of representing God to man as Messiah and Son of God. Can we to-day maintain our belief in the miracles of Jesus?

(i) It seems plausible, if we take one narrative after another and exercise our ingenuity upon it, to reduce it to an account of a natural occurrence; but if we take the record as a whole, if we allow ourselves to be impressed by the total reality of what Christ both was and did, the story will appear to us as harmonious in all its parts. The acts of Jesus were beneficent, for the one apparent exception, the blasting of the fig-tree (Matt. xxi. 19), may be regarded as a symbolic prophetic act with the gracious purpose of warning the disciples of the impending doom over impenitent Israel. As beneficent in healing disease, delivering from danger, and relieving need, they were altogether congruous with His function as Saviour of men; they were signs and seals of man's redemption from sin and evil; and thus were not primarily *credentials* of His mission, but only secondarily so as *constituents* of that mission to reveal God, not only as enlightening truth, but as saving grace. Had these acts not been included in His work He

would not have wrought them, for His meat was to do His Father's will (John iv. 34).

(ii) He refused as a temptation the use of His supernatural power to further His own interests, or to assert His claims (Matt. iv. 1-11); and He would not overcome unbelief by any display of that power (xvi. 4). While He condemned the unbelief that resisted even the evidence of His mission which His works offered, He deprecated the faith in Himself that rested on no other grounds (John iv. 48). The cure of the paralytic is not an exception; for the sole purpose of the act was not to prove His right to forgive sin (Matt. ix. 6), but the cure of disease was His proper work, and the lower gift was needed by the sufferer to assure him against the challenge offered by the foes of Christ, of the reality of his forgiveness. The miracles were seals, credentials, because they were signs, constituents of His mission. If the evangelists were credulously transmitting myths and legends, how is it that they so emphasise this aspect of the ministry, so uncongenial to the mere wonder-seeker?

(iii) How deeply rooted the miracles are in Jesus' spiritual purpose is surely evident from the close connection with faith which is always insisted on. Not only was faith required in the recipients of benefit, or their intercessors; not only did unbelief restrain His mighty works, as at Nazareth (Matt. xiii. 58), but Jesus Himself was conscious of the exercise of faith in God, expressed in prayer (John xi. 41, 42). He ever thought of God as the God of grace, whose almighty power was available to heal, deliver, save, and bless men through Him on the one condition of human receptivity to this divine communicativeness. Had Jesus not claimed and used that divine power, as He did in His miracles, He would have proved Himself inconsistent with His own view of God and man's relation to God.

(iv) He was moved with compassion for man's needs, sorrows, sins, but had His pity been powerless to relieve and rescue, not only would His love have been His torture, but His confidence in God as Father would have been too

sorely tried by the withholding of God's power to save and bless as His love, interpreting God's heart, willed. These considerations show that the miracles of Jesus are not excrescences which can be easily removed, and leave the revelation of God and redemption of man unchanged in character and in scope; but on the contrary, to the writer at least, a Christ who being Son of God, and seeking to become Saviour of men, wrought no miracle, would be less intelligible and credible than the Jesus whom the Gospel records so consistently present to us.

(3) Another set of considerations bearing on the question affects the trustworthiness of the Gospels.

(i) Just as the miracles are harmonious with the presentation of Christ in the Gospels, so even the narratives are so built into the structure of the books that, when we remove every story of a miracle, every saying related to a miracle, every occasion for and result of a miracle, the Gospels lie before us in ruins. It is easy to suppose the removal of some of the miracles without any serious change in the course of the narrative, but we must face what is involved in cutting out all the stories of miracles to realise how fragmentary is the record of the life of Jesus left to us, quite insufficient for that conception of Him to which Christian faith attaches itself. We must recognise then that the records of miracles cannot be treated as later additions to the original authentic story of Jesus, but must be regarded as integral parts of it. Can the evangelists or their sources be trusted at all, if they deceive or are deceived in this aspect of the ministry of Jesus?

(ii) Harnack tries to save the credit of the evangelists in order to secure a historical basis for his representation of the life, teaching, and work of Christ by two arguments. On the one hand, while dismissing the 'nature' miracles as entirely incredible, he accepts the healing ministry of Jesus as historically probable; but seeks to explain it by the influence of a strong personality over neurotic subjects. On the other hand, he insists on the prevalence of the belief in miracles to show that the writers of the Gospels were

in this respect only as credulous as their contemporaries. Each of these arguments demands closer consideration. The first was partially anticipated in Matthew Arnold's theory of *moral therapeutics*. 'In one respect alone,' says Matthew Arnold, 'have the miracles recorded by the evangelists a more real ground than the mass of miracles of which we have the relation. Medical science has never gauged, perhaps never enough set itself to gauge, the intimate connection between moral fault and disease. To what extent, or in how many cases, what is called illness is due to moral springs having been used amiss, whether by being overused, or by not being used sufficiently, we hardly at all know, and we too little inquire. Certainly it is due to this very much more than we commonly think, and the more it is due to this the more do *moral therapeutics* rise in possibility and importance.' [1] Harnack accepts the view of the influence of one personality over another in a more unqualified way even. 'We see that a firm will and a convinced faith act even on the bodily life and cause appearances which appeal to us as miracles. Who has here hitherto with certainty measured the realm of the possible and real? Nobody. Who can say how far the influences of one soul on another soul, and of the soul on the body reach? Nobody. Who can still affirm that all which in this realm appears as striking rests only on deception and error? Certainly no miracles occur, but there is enough of the wonderful and inexplicable.' [2] This theory is open to challenge on several grounds.

First of all we cannot, on scientific medical testimony, assign to moral therapeutics a scope wide enough to include the whole healing ministry of Jesus. 'Should the critics,' says Dr. R. J. Ryle, 'have the courage of their convictions when they declare that they cannot disentangle the narrative of the life from all the mighty works, and when they soundly assert that the healing ministry stands on as firm historical grounds as the best accredited parts of the teach-

[1] *Literature and Dogma*, pp. 143-4.
[2] *Das Wesen des Christentums*, p. 18.

ing, then the partisans of a more conservative position may very fairly demand that the attempt to draw arbitrary lines of distinction between one kind of mighty work and another shall be given up. If the dropsy which was cured was real dropsy, and the withered arm a real withered arm; if the blind old men were not the subjects of hysteria, and the sick folk who were laid in the streets were not all neurotics, then we can no longer accept the works of healing as historical and reject the so-called cosmical miracles. One who could rejuvenate at a word a strand of atrophied nerve might bring about the wasting of a fig-tree in a moment, and it would be rash to say that he might not command the winds and the waves, and raise the dead to life.' [1] Only a part of the healing works of Jesus can then be regarded as possibly natural occurrences. If He could and did heal diseases otherwise incurable, on what grounds can we set limits to His supernatural power?

Secondly, the Gospels attest the 'nature' just as the 'healing' miracles. In the presentation by the evangelists there is no indication of any difference in credibility. In candour the writer must admit that the two miracles which cause him the most difficulty are the turning of water into wine at Cana in Galilee, and the feeding of the five thousand (if the feeding of the four thousand is not a duplicate, a variant tradition of the same occurrence, it must also be added). On the one hand, there does not appear an adequate necessity for such an action, so liable also to be misunderstood as suggesting that the kingdom would minister to sensuous gratification. On the other hand, it is impossible to picture, as by the nature of the occurrence we must try to do, the process of transformation or multiplication. The narratives, too, are indefinite as to what actually took place. Here suspense of judgment seems the only possible course. The withering of the fig-tree is analogous to the control of the processes of life Jesus displayed in the miracles of healing. The stilling of the storm

[1] 'The Neurotic Theory of the Miracles of Healing,' *Hibbert Journal*, v. p. 585.

may be regarded as the divine response to the confident faith of Jesus in His Father's care over Him. As regards the walking on the water, the writer has come to no certain conclusion. Recognising fully that there are greater difficulties in the narratives of the nature miracles, he would venture to urge this general consideration, not to force a premature decision of the question, but as a plea for suspense of judgment at least, that, if the healing ministry of Jesus cannot be explained by *moral therapeutics*, then it does prove Jesus' possession of a supernatural power, and there seems to be no adequate reason for limiting such a power to the control of the processes of life. If in the human body mind controls matter, it is not incredible that He who could direct the processes of life could also control the forces of nature for the same beneficent ends.

Thirdly, if we explain the miracles of Jesus, or such as can be plausibly so explained, as natural occurrences, our judgment opposes itself to the view of the miracles, not only of the multitudes who witnessed them and the evangelists who have recorded them, but even of Jesus who performed them. As has already been mentioned, while He did not regard as adequate the faith that rested on the evidence to His claims of the miracles (John iv. 48), He did regard these acts as proofs of His mission from God, and rebuked the unbelief that rejected such a witness (John xiv. 11). He expressly claimed to cast out devils by the Spirit of God as a token that the Kingdom of God had come (Matt. xii. 28). If He had regarded His miracles as natural occurrences, due to the exercise of His personal influence alone, could He have assigned such significance to them ? The theory under criticism involves that Jesus Himself was deceived or deceiving, as it is not likely that the evangelists invented His complex attitude ; and that for Christian faith will appear a decisive argument against it.

(iii) The second line of argument, taken by Harnack, next invites our attention. The evangelists in their records of miracles were but following the common fashion of their

age and surroundings. 'We know now,' he says, 'that miracles were reported of prominent persons, not first of all a long time after their death, also not first of all after several years, but immediately, often already on the next day.'[1] Without now turning aside from our present purpose to discuss the wider question whether there is not some exaggeration in these words, suggesting, as they do, a universal credulity, we may press the question, whether it is fair argument to discredit the evidence of the Gospels by the general consideration that testimony regarding miracles is often untrustworthy. A judge and a jury would be in a sorry plight if, because some witnesses spoke falsely, they declined to accept any evidence as true without a careful examination of the respective credibility of those who gave the evidence. Before we dismiss the evangelists as sharing the common credulity, let us at least weigh some pleas for their trustworthiness which can be advanced. The narratives of miracles in the Gospels are marked by a sobriety and simplicity of statement distinguishing them from the fantastic accounts found elsewhere. A moral value and religious significance attaches to the miracles they record, on account of the close connection and thorough consistency of these acts with the person, work, and teaching of Jesus, which cannot be even detected in the products of the superstitious credulity of that age. The New Testament indicates that the place of Christ in the thought and life of the primitive community makes it at least probable that the endeavour was made in the transmission of the tradition, until the literary sources came into existence, to maintain a trustworthy testimony to the words and works of Jesus. Can a like claim be made for any contemporary person to whom miracles were assigned? If we take duly into account the emphasis in the New Testament on truth, both objective as certainty of reality and subjective as sincerity of statement, will such credulity, as is charged against the evangelists, appear at all credible? The Christian community in that age

[1] *Das Wesen des Christentums*, p. 17.

certainly did not possess our modern conception of the order of nature ; it was not dominated in its thinking, as we are, by the uniformity of natural law, and the continuity of natural processes ; but it did possess (and in the first section of this chapter it has been shown that probably at a very early stage of development man did possess) a sense of the difference between ordinary and extraordinary events, occurrences explicable and inexplicable. Certainly the New Testament has not the irreligious conception of nature separate from, and independent of, God ; but the power and purpose of God were more distinctly recognised in some acts than in others. The fact that we have in the New Testament three words to describe such acts—*τέρας* (פֶּלֶא Exodus xv. 11, Daniel xii. 6), *δύναμις* (גְּבוּרָה Deut. iii. 24), and *σημεῖον* (אוֹת Exod. iv. 8), shows that there was a distinct conception of miracles. The impression made on the witnesses, the power from God possessed by the worker, and the meaning of the act in relation to God's revelation of Himself, are the aspects recognised in these terms. We cannot save the integrity of the authors of the New Testament by the sacrifice of their intelligence. They were well aware that they were ascribing to Christ extraordinary acts in proof of His exceptional claims ; and it is to the writer simply unbelievable that they would ascribe to Him such acts without adequate evidence. The date Harnack assigns to the Gospels does not remove them to a sufficient distance from the events recorded to allow of so widespread and thorough a deception of, and by, the evangelists.

(4) On what grounds then must we sacrifice the credibility of the Gospels, and with that the trustworthiness of the conception of Jesus Christ which is the foundation of Christian faith ? Hume maintains that a miracle *per se* is so incredible that no amount of such evidence as we can get can authenticate it. 'A miracle,' he says, 'is a violation of the laws of nature ; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be

imagined. . . . The consequence is that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish. Or briefly, it is contrary to experience that a miracle should be true, but not contrary to experience that evidence should be false.' [1] Mill states the objection with much greater moderation. 'The question can be stated fairly as depending on a balance of evidence; a certain amount of positive evidence in favour of miracles, and a negative presumption from the general course of human experience against them.' [2]

(i) We can first of all turn Mill against Hume. Mill admits that there is 'a certain amount of positive evidence in favour of miracles,' and so proves how far too sweeping is Hume's phrase, 'contrary to experience.' This phrase challenges closer scrutiny. It may mean, as Paley has pointed out, either *all* experience, so begging the question by ignoring the evidence Mill admits, or *common experience*, so sinking to a truism. Hume's sceptical view of the principle of causality forbids any such confident generalisation about what is, or what is not, contrary to all or even to common experience. The very conception of miracle is that it is an exceptional occurrence, not in accordance with, and so not explicable by, common experience.

(ii) Hume offers an account of miracles which may find some justification in the extravagant views of some older theologians,[3] but which no modern theologian would entertain for a single moment. No evolution of the laws of nature, no suspension of its forces, no invasion of its order, need be assumed. The conception of miracle advanced in the first section of this chapter is that it is the immanent action of God in nature, original and not habitual; but the action of the same wise, true, and good God is entirely

[1] *Of Miracles.* [2] *Essays on Religion*, p. 221.

[3] Aquinas describes miracles as 'praeter naturam,' 'supra et contra naturam'; while Augustine had been content to say 'contra naturam quae nobis est nota.' Löscher is very confident that 'solus deus potest tum supra naturae vires tum contra naturae leges agere,' and Buddeus supposes that a *suspensio legum naturae* is followed by a *restitutio*.

consistent, whether it appear as ordinary in the order of nature, or exceptional in a miracle. The opponents of miracle must prove that it is either impossible or irrational or unrighteous for God to act freely in the world, sometimes in ways we call natural, at others in ways we must admit supernatural. Enough has surely been said in dealing with God's revelation as redemptive to show that from the standpoint of faith in God's saving grace miracles appear intelligible and credible.

(iii) We may even take up Hume's challenge, and maintain that it is more probable that miracles should occur, than that Christianity, which has filled so large a place and played so great a part in human history, and which, if the signs of the times in the present spread of the Gospel do not deceive, is likely yet to become the world-religion, should be built on the shifting sand of credulous superstition, or than that the Christian experience with its certainty of God's love in Christ's grace, and its witness of the Spirit of God to a full salvation from sin and death, should be an illusion, or than that God's providence should employ for the highest ends of His Kingdom not truth but a lie. It is, on the one hand, only a philosophy which allows itself to be dominated by the methods of physical science instead of being guided by the moral ideals and religious aspirations, which find in Christ their fulfilment, which represents miracle as unintelligible and incredible; whereas a philosophy which gives full weight to moral and religious experience, as that is attained in Christ alone, will demand a God over all as well as in all and through all, free to act according to the needs of man and the ends of His grace. It is, on the other hand, only a literary and historical criticism that lacks discernment for moral and religious differences, which can treat the New Testament as open to the same suspicion of credulity or unveracity as other writings which do not display the same qualities of souls enlightened and renewed by the Spirit of God, whereas a criticism that can estimate such values will give to the New Testament writers the confidence and respect they deserve.

(5) The miracles of Christ raise the problem and offer the solution, and so attention has been concentrated on them. The discussion can be completed only in affirming the Christian view of Jesus Christ as the supernatural person, with which the next chapter will deal. For it must be conceded that it is His supremacy in the realm of the moral conscience and religious consciousness that offers, not the sole ground of belief in His miracles, but the strongest reason, as it is antecedently probable that the acts of so unique a person should also be unique. The Acts of the Apostles testify to a continuance of supernatural power in the Christian community, but that power is conceived as the gift of the Ascended Lord ; and accordingly if belief in Christ as the New Testament represents Him is justified, these manifestations of His continued activity will appear not improbable. There may be critical difficulties about some of the narratives in Acts, although the trustworthiness of Luke as a historian has undaunted champions among modern scholars ; but these minute inquiries lie outside the scope of the present volume. The purpose the writer has set himself in this chapter has been attained, if he has advanced considerations which commend as deserving of serious consideration the conviction rooted in Christian experience, that not only does God respond to man's religion in revelation, but that revelation is made in an immanent activity of God in man and in nature so unique that it must be described by the terms inspiration and miracle.[1]

[1] One of the most recent books on the subject here being dealt with is *Miracles in the New Testament*, by J. M. Thompson. In his definition of miracle, while professing to admit the possibility, he uses language that implicitly denies it, as he represents it as a breach of natural law. In his examination of the evidence in the Gospels he allows himself a most arbitrary negative criticism. And nevertheless he claims that a non-miraculous divine incarnation is more intelligible and credible than a miraculous ; but the representation of the person of Christ his treatment leaves, offers no historical foundation for a Christology other than a naturalistic or humanitarian. Without express reference his position has been adequately dealt with in the general discussion in these pages, and in the following chapter his view of a non-miraculous divine incarnation is subjected to closer scrutiny.

CHAPTER IV

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

I

(1) It was necessary in the preceding chapter, in dealing with the Christian view of revelation, to deal with Miracle, and especially with the miracles of Jesus. The attack of criticism on the reality of the miracles of Jesus was met on the assumption that the reality of Jesus Himself, and the possibility of our having some trustworthy historical knowledge of Him, were conceded; but in recent years there have been repeated assaults on that assumption. There is raging at the present moment in Germany a conflict as to whether Jesus ever did live, and some echoes of the clash of battle have been heard even in Britain. It cannot be denied that the Christian Church existed in the second century, and that during the same century it was making a collection of Sacred Scriptures. It cannot be denied further that the object of religious faith presented in the Christian writings and accepted by the Christian communities was a Divine Saviour and Lord, in whom the living Christ experienced as present and active by Christian believers was identified with the historical Jesus, about whose earthly life and ministry four records had been handed down. Within the Christian Church itself there has never been any doubt or question that the living Christ of faith and the historical Jesus of the Gospels are one and the same person. This identity is now challenged; the living Christ is dismissed as a subjective illusion, the origin of which is variously accounted for, and the historical Jesus is declared never to have existed objectively, but to be equally with the living Christ a creation of the religious

spirit of man. Some of the exponents and advocates of this view even go further, and offer the Christian Church as a consolation for the loss of the reality of the Divine Saviour and Lord the assurance that it makes no difference to religion whether its ideas and ideals ever had any corresponding reality in the realm of time and sense in human history, so long as the ideas can be held true, and the ideals right in the eternal realm of spirit. We must return to the question whether Christian faith needs and rests on historical fact or not, and so this consolation is vain, a mere mockery of the hopeless grief the Christian Church would feel if indeed the historical reality of Jesus Christ the Lord were disproved: what we must now consider is some of the ways in which the objective existence of the historical Jesus is denied, and the subjective illusion of the living Christ is accounted for.

(2) In order that the ground may be cleared for these theories of the origin of Christianity without a historical founder, an extreme negative criticism of the Christian literary sources has to be practised.

(i) The Gospels must be thrown into the second century at earliest, and the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles must be denied; or, if not, the testimony these writings bear to the historical person must in one way or another be explained away. It is not the function of this volume to deal with the literary or historical criticism of the New Testament; all these questions have already been discussed in another volume in this series.[1] All that need be said here is that the dominant tendency of modern scholarship is to assign to the Gospels a much earlier date than was formerly the case, and that with a very few exceptions modern scholars are agreed about the authenticity of the Pauline Epistles which contain the indubitable testimony to the historical person of Jesus.

(ii) A quotation from a German scholar who has most temperately and competently discussed the subject, Dr. Carl Clemen, may indicate briefly what the critical position

[1] A. S. Peake, D.D., *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament.*

really is, although so great a scholar as Harnack now assigns to the Gospels a considerably earlier date. 'The Gospels, it is true, for the most part originated at earliest after the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70; but they point back to an older time. There are to be found in each of them, for instance, representations which do not harmonise, and which accordingly cannot have originated at the same time; in other words, the conception of Jesus, even if it were purely unhistorical, has passed through several stages. Do the forty years from 30 to 70, from the limit of time which has always been assigned to the death of Christ to the destruction of Jerusalem, in connection with which the oldest Gospel must have come into being, really suffice for this development? Further, we must limit this interval still more; for we have one more witness, the last and the oldest, for the historicity of Jesus —that is, the Apostle Paul.'

'In this I certainly assume that not only Paul himself, regarding whose journeys we have in the second part of the Acts of the Apostles the uniquely trustworthy account of one of his companions, is a historical reality (Crösse= magnitude), but also that at least his chief letters to the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, and the first to the Thessalonians, are genuine. If that is disputed by some theologians, the position is altogether untenable; letters in which so many things necessary for an understanding are assumed as known to the readers, as is the case in the letters to the Corinthians; such letters nobody invents even to-day, how much less in an earlier age. It is accordingly a good sign for the sound judgment of Robertson, Drews, and Steudel that they do not venture on the rejection of all Pauline letters, which Kalthoff and Lublinski, without many hesitations, assert; but Robertson, Drews, and Steudel try to get rid of all the statements in 1 Corinthians (xi. 23 ff. and xv. 3 ff.), which more especially prove the historicity of Jesus by declaring them not authentic. But for this again there is nothing decisive (although unfortunately here also a couple of theologians have led

the way). If Paul wrote (to speak only of the second passage): "I delivered unto you what I myself received, that Jesus died, was buried, and was raised, and that he appeared to Cephas," etc., then he was thinking in regard to this tradition, which referred to experiences of Peter and others, not indeed about revelations which were given to him specially (for such things are not communicated by revelations, which are always psychologically conditioned), but about communications which persons like Peter made to him when he was with them, as we read in Galatians i. ff. And indeed this meeting took place for the first time three, and for the second time seventeen years after his conversion, which probably followed not a very long time after the death of Jesus (assuming once for all its historicity). In other words, even if it were the case that it was on this later occasion that Peter first of all told him about it (which is very improbable), yet there would remain only a very short time in which the assumption of a historical Jesus must have sprung up, even although such a person had not existed. Also there must have been still many alive who would have known this, and doubtless would have made objections. One can assert that Jesus is not historical reality only if in fact overwhelming proof for this can be produced.'[1] The early date of the Gospels, on the one hand, and the still earlier date of the Epistles of Paul on the other, offer so good a reason for trusting the testimony of these writings to the historical reality of Jesus, that their evidence can be set aside only if something more than conjecture and speculation is offered.

(iii) In this connection we may remind ourselves of the now notorious view of Schmiedel in his article in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, that there are nine pillars on which the historical presentation of the teaching of Jesus can be supported. He finds nine sayings of Jesus about Himself which it is impossible to conceive that the Christian community can have invented, for they are so opposed to the current conception of Him. We need not discuss whether

[1] *Der geschichtliche Jesus*, pp. 17-18.

Schmiedel rightly understands all these sayings, or whether they are as contradictory of the Christian view of Jesus as he regards them; but his argument from the standpoint of a very negative criticism is useful as showing how entirely untenable is the position of those who deny that Jesus ever existed.[1]

(iv) If there is so much testimony, even when criticism has done its worst upon the writings, to the fact that Jesus existed, the contrary argument drawn from the silence of contemporary writers loses its force. To take only two instances: the silence of Josephus, if it is a fact, is easily explained. 'Josephus,' says Clemen, 'avoids in his writings all that recalls the Messianic hope of his people, and could make it suspected by the Romans; for this reason he must have represented John the Baptist only as a preacher of repentance without speaking of his proclamation of the End, therefore he could have kept silence about the appearance of Jesus.' Philo does not mention Jesus, argues Clemen, for two reasons: (*a*) it is not at all probable that anything was known about Him in His lifetime in Egypt, and (*b*) even had anything been known, Philo had just as little occasion to mention Jesus as a modern German Jew writing on the Talmud would need to mention the founder of Zionism.[2]

(3) Even if the historical evidence could be set aside, the various theories offered in explanation of the origin of Christianity are so lacking in probability that no minute examination of them is necessary.

(i) Kalthoff regards primitive Christianity as a revolt of slaves, who, 'following a custom of Judaism, thought of the new society, for which they were striving (the Kingdom of God, the Church), as personified in an individual, the Messiah or Christ, and transferred Him to Palestine.' Against this theory there are three considerations: (*a*) there is no resemblance of this personified ideal to the historical

[1] See his *Die Hauptprobleme der Leben Jesu Forschung*, pp. 39-41; also *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, pp. 38-42, for a fuller discussion.
[2] *Der geschichtliche Jesus*, pp. 16-17.

Jesus of the Gospels; (*b*) the economic conditions of Palestine make such a slave revolt in Palestine entirely improbable; and (*c*) had Christianity been such an economic movement, it would have found such an acceptance among the common people from the beginning as there is no evidence of in the literary sources.

(ii) Jensen rediscovers in the Gospels the Babylonian Gilgamesch legend; but, to summarise Clemen's argument: (*a*) there is no proof that this legend was known in the circles where the Gospels originated; (*b*) it is unlikely that the Gospel tradition, which is so much fuller, would have taken over the mere skeleton of this legend; (*c*) had the evangelists used it at all, they would have used more of it, and adapted it by the same means as they are supposed to have employed with what they are represented as having borrowed; (*d*) the Gospel tradition does not rest on a single source, but contains primary and secondary elements; (*e*) the order of events in the Gospels is otherwise explicable, and need not be accounted for by the assumption of any such source.[1]

(iii) Robertson and Drews try to trace the whole tradition about Jesus, His life and His teaching, back to other religions. This method involves three assumptions: the similarity between the myths of these religions and the contents of the Gospels, the existence of these myths in the religions at the time of the contact of Christianity with them, and the actuality of the supposed contact; these three tests must be rigidly applied to each alleged case of borrowing by Christianity from other religions.[2] But before we apply the tests we must show that this or that feature must have been borrowed, that it could not have originated within the Jewish or Christian religion itself. Applying these principles Clemen dismisses most of Robertson's explanations as for one reason or another untenable, and as far less probable than others that can be offered from within the Jewish or Christian religion itself. Drews asserts the existence in pre-Christian times of the worship

[1] *Der geschichtliche Jesus*, pp. 19-27. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

of a God called Jesus, and derives the tradition of the death and resurrection of Jesus from the myth of a dying and reviving God of Nature. While the former assertion rests on altogether inadequate evidence, the latter derivation is open to two fatal objections: (*a*) there is no evidence that the myth was current in the first century of our era, or even if it were current, that it would be known in Christian circles; and (*b*) the representation of Jesus in the Gospels is not that of a God; but the human features, which belong to the oldest tradition, testify to a historical and not to a mythical origin of the New Testament conception.[1]

(iv) Other views, just as conjectural, need not be mentioned; but in concluding this argument we may insist that it is impossible to explain the origin of Christianity without assuming the historical reality of a founder. The religion with which Christianity stands in immediate historical connection is Judaism; and if it could be explained without the historical Jesus, it would be as a development of Judaism that it would be explicable. Modern scholarship has rendered invaluable services by recovering for us with a clearness and fulness which but a generation ago would have seemed impossible, the world in which Christianity came to be; we know contemporary Judaism so well that we can at least go on the assumption that if it, as known to us, cannot account for Christianity, any additional knowledge we might gain would not avail for that purpose. Even if parallels to the sayings of Jesus can be found in the Talmud, the teaching of the Gospels as a whole not only contains so much that is new, but gives to the old so new a meaning, that the personality of a great teacher must be assumed. So great is the difference between Judaism and Christianity, and so rapid the change from the one to the other, that a gradual development without a morally and religiously creative personality is incredible. It claims to be a founded religion; and its character and development demand the historical reality of a founder. The better we get to know the environment

[1] *Der geschichtliche Jesus*, pp. 33-35.

amid which it originated, and the inheritances it derived from Judaism, the less probable does the view appear that it invented its founder, and did not owe what is distinctive of it to His unique personality.[1]

II

(1) This extreme view which denies the existence of Jesus altogether is claimed by Schweitzer as the only alternative to the view that he advocates, and claims to be the inevitable result of the progress of literary and historical criticism. His book, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, has as its aim to compel modern theology to take refuge from thoroughgoing scepticism in thoroughgoing eschatology.

(i) He accepts Wrede's view in his book, *Das Messiasgeheimnis in den Evangelien*, that Mark's representation of Jesus as Messiah is a literary fiction; and maintains, in agreement with Johannes Weiss, whose book on *The Preaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God*, published in 1892, raised the issue, that Jesus preached the Kingdom of God as entirely future, eschatological, and transcendent. A much wider currency has been given to this view by the brilliant exposition of it in Loisy's *L'Évangile et l'Église*, which may be regarded as the classic of Roman Catholic Modernism. Father Tyrrell, the most notable Modernist in England, accepted this position in the work published after his death, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*. There is not absolute agreement on all points among the representatives of this tendency; but the general position may be briefly given.[2]

(ii) Jesus' conception of the Kingdom of God must be explained by the Apocalyptic ideas current in contemporary Judaism, and all statements in the Gospels which present any alternative view of the Kingdom must be regarded not as authentic sayings of Jesus, but as later additions to the primitive tradition, reflecting the views which after-

[1] *Der geschichtliche Jesus*, pp. 36-43.
[2] Fuller particulars may be found in *The Christian Certainty amid the Modern Perplexity*, pp. 279-321.

wards became current in the Christian community. For Jesus the Kingdom was altogether future, and He did not, and could not, regard Himself as its founder, but only as the herald of its coming. It was entirely supramundane, not a moral or religious order in the world, but a supernatural state of perfection, glory, and blessedness already existent with God, waiting manifestation on earth. Not His teaching or deeds did, or could, bring it. It must be brought by God's omnipotent power. Its coming was being delayed by the insufficiency of the penitence, awakened even by His preaching, among the people; and so to bring it speedily He resolved to offer His life as the ransom-price. When the Kingdom was established, He, too, would return again in power and glory, and would enter on His Messianic dignity. On earth He was but a prophet, declaring the coming of the Kingdom, and in His moral demands imposing on man 'a penitential discipline,' an 'interim ethic.' For our present purpose it is not needful to expose the *tour de force* by which Loisy seeks to prove that Roman Catholicism is a necessary development from this original germ of eschatological teaching, and that it has the advantage over Protestantism in this respect; for we are here only concerned with determining as accurately as we can the historical reality of the Founder of the Christian Church; was He but the herald of the coming Kingdom of God?

(2) In regard to this position it must be conceded that it has forced attention to an aspect of the teaching of Jesus of which the orthodox Christian theology has not taken sufficient account.

(i) Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom of God had a very much more important place in His ministry than has been usually assigned to it; and it seems impossible to translate His idea of the Kingdom merely into the moral and religious good for mankind which it has been generally held to be. It is more and other than the forgiveness of sin or the law of love; it is something else than the dominance in human thought and life of the idea of Divine

Fatherhood, or the ideal of human Brotherhood. We must admit that Jesus stood in the prophetic succession in not only completing the theology and the ethics of the Old Testament, but in fulfilling the hope of the chosen people of a decisive divine intervention in human history. He was not merely a teacher of universal and permanent principles of morality and religion, but the herald also of a divine purpose which was being realised in human history, and of which the decisive hour had struck.

(ii) In this respect the Liberal Protestant view of Harnack, in opposition to which Loisy wrote his book, is inadequate. If we regard the view of modern science and philosophy as final and satisfactory, then we must regard Jesus as visionary and fanatic; for He did not limit His view and outlook to the natural order, or to a normal development of mankind in religion and morals. While we need not take His language about the last things with prosaic literalness, as we do not so take the predictions of the prophets; while we must fully recognise that human language on such a theme must necessarily be largely figurative, yet we must not attempt to force His thoughts into the narrow limits of naturalism, or even the idealism which thinks only of a divine immanence in human morals and religion, and which allows only a slow progress in goodness and grace.

(iii) Professor Hogg in his book on *The Teaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom*, has brought out clearly and fully that for Jesus the Kingdom of God was a present, transcendent, supernatural reality, the advent of which depended on man's faith, on his receptivity for the blessings the Kingdom would bring. And unless we are prepared with Loisy to consider that Jesus was mistaken, and cherished expectations which were never fulfilled, we must recognise that Jesus' prophecy, like all prophecy, was conditional, and that the slow progress of the Kingdom which to His confident and ardent faith in God was imminent, is due to man's lack of faith, which He, too, recognised as hindering and delaying its coming. We must take into account the

two aspects of the Kingdom as God's act, and as conditioned by man's faith, and this will remove the apparent contradictions in the sayings of Jesus, which present the Kingdom as present and as future, as immanent in man's history and transcendent in God's purpose, as imminent and yet as delayed.

(iv) While Harnack unduly minimises the aspect of the Kingdom on which Loisy lays stress, he is right against Loisy in laying emphasis on Jesus' unique consciousness as Son of God, and as on that account the revealer of God as Father, on His moral ideal of the Higher Righteousness in the Law of Love. The idea of God and the ideal for man in the Gospel has a permanent and universal validity and value, as the human reason and conscience in receiving and responding thereto testifies. To speak of Jesus' moral teaching as an 'interim ethic,' or a 'penitential discipline,' is surely to force on Him a lower and a narrower conception of the Kingdom than any of His sayings warrant. The morality which prepares men for the advent of the Kingdom of God cannot be regarded as having only a temporary value or a transitional validity. The righteousness that brings the Kingdom must be surely akin to the righteousness of the Kingdom. With Loisy we may emphasise the conception of the Kingdom of God, and with Harnack the moral and religious content of the teaching of Jesus as in no way contradictory.

(3) While we fully admit all that this eschatological school has taught us, we must urge against the extreme position it holds that it assigns to the disciples and denies to the Master sayings the moral and religious worth of which both reason and conscience alike exalt, and so represents the disciples as greater than their Master. The moral ideal and the religious idea, which make Christianity superior to Judaism, are thus represented as due far more to the Christian community than to the Founder, who so soon became the object of its faith, reverence, and obedience. Further, Jesus is made far more dependent on His environment, the views and hopes of contemporary

Judaism in its Apocalyptic literature, than His followers. If Jesus failed to transcend His age and people, how did the Christian community succeed? It is surely much more likely that, if He deserved the place the Church assigned to Him, He would rise above these limitations Himself and lift His followers with Himself, than that they secured a freedom to which He did not attain. Once more, as we read the Gospels as a whole and yield ourselves to their total impression, do we not feel ourselves in the presence of one great personality, the moral character and religious consciousness of which is harmonious? It is the impress of one personality which gives to the Gospels with all their differences the moral and religious unity they possess. Lastly, when Jesus has been by this process of criticism reduced to a preacher of penitence and a herald of the coming of the Kingdom, as was John the Baptist, even if thereto be added His expectation that He would be the Messiah when the Kingdom came, and His conviction that by His death He could hasten that coming, is He great or unique enough to have been the Founder of the Christian Church, to have become the object of Christian Faith as the Divine Saviour and Lord, to have so influenced the course of human history that to multitudes in this generation He is still all that the first generation of Christian believers held Him to be? Surely in history we are entitled to look for *the sufficient reason* and *the efficient cause*; and it must be insisted that, defective as Harnack's view is because of his denial of miracles and his aversion to metaphysics, yet his insistence on the moral and religious uniqueness of Jesus makes the part Christ has played in human affairs much more credible than does Loisy's emphasis on the purely eschatological character of Jesus' teaching.

III

(1) While Harnack, however, is much less negative in his criticism of the Gospels than is Loisy, and while he offers us in his book *What is Christianity?* a conception of Christ

which recognises His moral and religious uniqueness in a degree that makes Christ's influence on human history appear much more intelligible, yet, as we have already seen, he denies that Jesus wrought any miracles in the sense of supernatural acts, and tries to account for the healing ministry as 'faith-healing' or 'moral therapeutics.' To the discussion of this question we need not now return, as it has been adequately dealt with in the preceding chapter, but his denial of the miracles involves a further issue of crucial importance. Harnack avoids metaphysics; he declines to commit himself to any explanation of the uniqueness of Christ, treats His filial consciousness as a secret that our psychology cannot fathom, and regards the apostolic doctrine of the person of Christ as a speculation which diverted Christian faith into unprofitable interests and efforts. The denial of miracles and the avoidance of metaphysics evidently go together. To admit the reality of the miracles would raise a problem about the person of Christ which would demand a metaphysical solution. To account for the uniqueness of Christ's filial consciousness the inadequacy of any psychology of even the religious consciousness would need to be recognised; and the inquirer would be forced into a metaphysical path which, whether it ended in the Johannine or Pauline Christology or not, would lead to a recognition of the supernatural that would in time make the miracles appear less incredible.

(2) A position of greater inconsistency than that of Harnack has been taken up by Mr. Thompson in his book *Miracles in the New Testament*. While he deals with the miracles in the same way as Harnack, he does not avoid metaphysics, but expressly accepts the doctrine of the orthodox Christology that in Jesus there was a Divine Incarnation, and even maintains that what he contends for, a Divine Incarnation without miracle is a more worthy conception than that current in the Christian Church. His argument may be briefly considered.

(i) He maintains, first of all, that the denial of the miracles

is not a denial of the supernatural, but rather a recognition of it in its true character. In all natural forces and laws, in all normal events we may, and ought to, recognise the supernatural agency of God. To regard the world as not self-caused, or self-sustained, but as due in all its order as well as change to an immanent divine activity, is to affirm the supernatural. But against this use of the term supernatural it may be urged that while it affirms a divine immanence in nature, it denies a divine transcendence of nature ; it denies the probability, if not the possibility, of any expression of the divine wisdom other than that already given in natural laws, or any exercise of the divine power other than that already found in natural forces, while it limits the divine goodness in the fulfilment of its ends to the means these laws and forces afford. It so identifies God and the world that it denies God personal freedom ; it tends to abandon theism for pantheism. Only if it could be proved that God's wisdom is exhaustively expressed in nature's laws, or His power absolutely exercised in nature's forces, or His goodness perfectly realised in normal events, would this identification of God's supernatural agency and the natural order be justified.

(ii) Secondly, Mr. Thompson contends that the denial of the miracles of Jesus is necessary in order that the complete humanity of Jesus may be affirmed. He has not expressed himself fully on two questions of the utmost importance, although he suggests that we must insist on an identity of Christ's moral nature with our nature as we have recently recognised the human limitations of His knowledge. Does the completeness of Jesus' humanity involve a denial of His sinless character or His filial consciousness, the uniqueness of both of which Harnack affirms? If it does, how can He be regarded as a Divine Incarnation ? In dealing with the Resurrection, Mr. Thompson asserts that without accepting the tradition of the Empty Grave, and without committing ourselves to any opinion as regards the nature of the two appearances which he finds in the earliest tradition, we may yet believe

that Christ lives, and that we can experience Him as alive. Here he does recognise as consistent with Jesus' complete humanity what must be at least confessed as not predicable of other men. If we may suppose that he would also admit that as regards His moral character and His religious consciousness Jesus was exceptional, then complete humanity would not exclude uniqueness in some respects, and why not in others, such as the working of miracles ?

(iii) To be consistent Mr. Thompson would need to deny everything that distinguished Jesus from other men, and he would then deprive himself of any ground for professing belief in a divine incarnation. He does affirm that we must recognise the real divinity in the complete humanity ; but if complete humanity means that Jesus was in all respects exactly like other men, why should He alone be regarded as a divine incarnation, and why should not all men be so regarded ? We must go, if we follow him here, a step further in the pantheistic direction. Some distinction between Jesus and other men there must be, if we are to confess of Him what we do not assert of any other man. This argument brings us to the central issue about the person of Christ. If we deny His miracles, must we not consistently deny His uniqueness ; and if we deny His uniqueness must we not cease trifling with words, and give up the belief in the divine incarnation, except in some vague pantheistic form that all men are divine ?

(3) Assuming that the negative criticism of the Gospels which reduces Jesus to a 'faith-healer' on the one hand, and to a 'visionary' on the other hand, cannot justify itself, and that through the Gospels we can get to know what the historical Jesus was, we must try to answer the question : What did He think of Himself ? It has already been indicated that Jesus considered His miracles as wrought by a power God had given Him, and as outward signs of His Messiahship. It has also been shown that Jesus conceived the Kingdom of God as not only a moral and religious progress of mankind, but as a supernatural order with God to be realised on earth by the act

of God when men had the faith to receive it. One cannot escape the conclusion that Jesus in His thoughts and deeds alike moved, in communion with, dependence on, submission to God as the Father, in a realm which we cannot describe adequately by any other term than supernatural. If to believe that above the order of the world of our common experience there is a present active and beneficent divine reality, responsive in fulness of blessing to human faith beyond the bounds of natural good, is superstition, then Jesus was superstitious. But if He gave in Himself ' infallible proof ' of that divine reality, we may gladly accept the superstition as a revelation. There are three respects in which Jesus showed Himself supernatural, above and beyond the bounds of our common humanity.

(i) The moral character, shown not only in the moral rightness of His deeds, but also in the moral wisdom of His words, is absolutely unique. The portrait the Gospels present to us is that of a sinless personality, as the charges against Him that unbelief has brought on closer scrutiny fall to the ground, and we need not even waste time in looking into them.[1] Calling men to repentance and offering them the forgiveness of sin, there is no trace in the Gospels of any penitence for His own sin, or prayer for its forgiveness. If there were any secret sin in Him, or even the memory of sins in the past, this would show a moral insensibility in irreconcilable contrast with the moral discernment His teaching shows. There is nothing in Jesus' self-witness corresponding to Paul's confession in Romans vii. This sinlessness, outward as seen in the evangelical portrait of Him, inward as proved by the absence of the consciousness of sin, is, however, never represented as a moral impassivity. One cannot believe that any disciple invented the story of the Temptation or of the Struggle in Gethsemane ; and, as there were no witnesses of the first, and the witnesses of the second according to the narrative itself were for most of the time asleep

[1] See *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, pp. 286-7.

(Matt. xxvi. 40, 43, 45), the accounts must come in some way from Jesus Himself. Not confessing the actuality of sin, He yet confesses the liability to temptation. It is in the light of such experiences that we must interpret His saying to the young ruler: 'Why callest thou me good? none is good save one, even God' (Mark x. 18). Not conscious of actual sin, yet aware of the possibility of moral failure, in sincerity and humility He refuses to claim for Himself, until His Father's will is accomplished, the possession of that divine perfection. The narratives of the Gospels present such a contrast in moral spirit and purpose between the Master and the disciples, that to the writer at least it seems absolutely incredible that any one of the disciples, or several in concert, or the Christian community generally could have first invented and then depicted the personality of Jesus as it appears in the Gospels. Some of the defects of the narrators would have been assigned as excellences to Jesus. Some indication of moral failure, had there been any, would have unwittingly escaped notice. The liability to temptation and the reality of struggle would have been concealed, or explained away. The moral realism, so far removed from the docetism of the later orthodoxy, surely guarantees the trustworthiness of the portraiture. It would be easy, but it is unnecessary, to collect passages from writers not accepting the orthodox Christology to prove the reverence for the moral character of Jesus which is almost universal wherever the Gospels are known. More recent challenges of the moral ideal presented in the teaching must be dealt with in a subsequent chapter (Chapter VIII.); but now we are concerned only with the impression made by the sinless, holy, loving personality. Can we account for that personality by heredity, environment, or any of the factors that condition human development?

(ii) Appreciating to the full the goodness and godliness of 'the quiet in the land,' the pious Jewish circle in which He grew up, yet the contrast between Him and His mother and brethren, and others of the good and godly we meet

with in the Gospels, is still too great for any explanation to be adequate which does not recognise His moral uniqueness and even transcendence. The believer in the tradition of the Virgin-birth may be able to see some connection between the moral perfection of the personality of Jesus and the mode of His entrance into human life. If His birth was 'not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God';[1] if the entrance of the Son of God into humanity was by a supernatural act of God, in which human faith in the mother was receptive of, and responsive to, divine grace,[2] then it is intelligible that He who entered into an inheritance of faith and consequent obedience, and not of tendency towards evil, and into an environment where the influences of the home would be sanctified by the knowledge of the sacred trust and task God had assigned, never even in the beginnings of His moral development was turned from the right into the wrong way. Three objections to this view may be briefly met. It is, *firstly*, not materialism, as runs the foolish taunt; for it was not the absence of the paternal function but the receptivity of human faith in the mother for the divine grace in the supernatural act of God that was the efficient cause of the unique manner of His birth. The personality was morally and religiously conditioned in its entrance on human life. *Secondly*, the moral reality of His life is not denied, for it has to be shown that no moral development is real which does not begin with moral failure. The possibility of choosing right or wrong involves not sinfulness, but freedom. Jesus by the manner of His birth was not determined to goodness, but was guarded against turning towards evil before moral choice was possible. *Thirdly*, His personality is not merely a pattern to be imitated by us; it is typical, and, as we shall see further, reproductive. To be our Saviour and Lord, to show us not only what goodness is, but by His grace to

[1] The writer cannot resist the impression that in these phrases of the Fourth Evangelist there is a covert reference to the fact of the Virgin-birth.
[2] See *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, chap. ii.

make us good, He must be more than merely our Brother. It is His difference from us, and not His resemblance to us, that enables Him to effect in us an inward moral and religious change which we could not effect in ourselves. The grace of God creative in Him of His perfect personality is recreative through Him in us to make our personality perfect. The writer has ventured thus briefly to state his own view on this disputed question, as to him the fact of the Virgin-birth is both credible on a comparison of the literary and historical probabilities for and against, and intelligible as offering some explanation of the moral uniqueness and transcendence of Jesus. He does not feel warranted in dealing with it at greater length for two reasons: *firstly*, because there are questions regarding the person of Christ still to be discussed of more crucial significance for faith than this whether Jesus was virgin-born or not; and *secondly*, because there is much less agreement among Christian scholars on this subject than on others to be dealt with, and he is not anxious to commend for acceptance his own private opinions, but the common faith of Christians.

(iii) We follow only practical convenience in dealing with the moral character of Jesus separately from the religious consciousness; yet for Jesus Himself there was no such distinction of morality and religion. His moral perfection was the expression and exercise in deed and word of His religious consciousness. He knew, trusted, loved and obeyed God as Father, and His life in its goodness and godliness was the life of the Son of God. It is in His relation to God that His character finds its explanation. While in the Synoptics Jesus speaks of God as Father, it is only in the Fourth Gospel that He often speaks of Himself as the Son. How far this Gospel can be taken as history, and how far it must be taken as doctrine, will be considered in the next section of this chapter. Meanwhile it may be pointed out that with the exception of a few passages in which the metaphysics of the evangelist can be detected, the Sonship so frequently referred to is

essentially moral and religious. The Son's dependence on and submission to the Father is as much insisted on as His communion with the Father. There is one utterance in the Synoptics, Matt. xi. 25 27 and Luke x. 22, which expresses a filial consciousness similar to that expressed in the Fourth Gospel. This has been spoken of as 'a Johannine block of marble which has somehow strayed among the plain Synoptic bricks'; but this too facile disposal of a difficulty has against it the fact that the same utterance appears in Matthew and in Luke with only such modifications as the editorial activity of each is sufficient to explain, and that accordingly it must be traced back to the common source, called by Harnack Q, and sometimes identified with the *Logia* of which Papias speaks. This is a very early collection of the sayings of Jesus, probably earlier than Mark's Gospel, and possibly even used in that Gospel, although it seems impossible to accept Sir William Ramsay's suggestion that it was made before the death of Jesus.[1] Any reconstruction of this source must at best be conjectural; but this is the form in which Harnack reproduces this particular saying. He places in brackets the words of the authenticity of which he is less certain. 'All has been delivered to me by the Father, and no man has known [the Son, but only the Father, and none has known] the Father but only the Son, and he to whom the Son wills to reveal it.'[2] If there is any part doubtful it is the assertion of the mystery of the Son's being; there is no doubt about Jesus' claim to know God as Father as no man knows Him, and to be alone able to reveal God as Father to men. The first clause is not a claim to absolute sovereignty, but a declaration of absolute dependence, even as the words preceding express entire submission to the will of God, even when that will limits the effect of His ministry to the babes. The claim, too, must be interpreted in the light of the further description of Himself as meek and lowly

[1] The *Expositor*, seventh series, vol. iii. p. 424.
[2] *Sprüche und Reden Jesu*, pp. 17, 18, 94, 183-4, 188 ff.

in heart, and as accordingly offering to the labouring and heavy-laden rest in a light burden and an easy yoke.[1] Jesus' consciousness is a filial consciousness, trust in, surrender to, as well as knowledge of and love for God as Father. We obscure the distinctive character of the Christian revelation if we bring to the forefront the abstract metaphysical conception, and throw into the background the concrete moral and religious consciousness of Sonship. That consciousness may require, and the writer believes that it does require, a metaphysical explanation; but the historical datum to start from is the Sonship of Jesus. When we observe the reserve that Jesus maintained as regards the Messiahship, it is not surprising that He should have said even less about His relation to God to the disciples who were not yet prepared for such a revelation. Nor is it improbable that he may have spoken more frankly to a few who could understand, and that in the Fourth Gospel there may be preserved the reminiscences of one of His confidants. It would be a mistake, however, to lay all the stress on such utterances, for Jesus was living His Sonship when He was not speaking of it. If we compare the teaching of the Old Testament about God even at its best, still more when we draw into our comparison the ideas of contemporary Judaism, the simplicity, constancy, and certainty with which Jesus speaks of God as Father must surprise us. How did He see so clearly and feel so surely the Fatherhood of God? Prophetic illumination does not seem to offer an adequate explanation. It was the unique relationship to God of which He was conscious that enabled Him to reveal the Father as He had never been yet revealed to man. That relationship was being constantly revealed in His confidence in God, and His submission to God. Whether we always have the very word of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel or not, Jesus might fitly assure His disciples that 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'

[1] Although this utterance is found in Matthew only, who could doubt its genuineness?

(John xiv. 9), for as we read the Gospels, and so reproduce as far as we can the experience of discipleship, there dawns upon us and brightens to the perfect day the revelation of the Father in the Son.

(iv) What Jesus was in Himself in moral character and in religious consciousness He was not for Himself alone. To adapt Paul's phrases, He was not only living soul, but life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. xv. 45). His goodness and godliness were communicative, reproductive, we may say contagious. During His earthly life He awakened in men the sense of sin, the desire for pardon, the aspiration after holiness, the hunger for God; and He imparted to men the certainty of the Father, the assurance of pardon and the experience of salvation. 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' 'Thy faith hath saved thee,' 'Go in peace' (Luke vii. 48, 50). These were not words on His lips merely; they were facts in the lives of those who trusted in Him. His death did not end this gracious and blessed ministry to the souls of men. In all lands and all ages men have experienced His saving grace as really as those who came into sensible contact with Him. He has proved Himself always and everywhere able to save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him (Hebrews vii. 25).[1] Is this uniform and constant testimony of Christian experience to be pronounced a subjective illusion? If it is, how has it so invariably had such objective effects as changed lives, transformed characters, sorrow turned into joy, the hope of immortality in the very hour and article of death, the constraint of unbounded service and uncalculating sacrifice for His Name's sake? Is not the testimony of the saints to the secret of their holiness, and of the saved to the source of their deliverance, as valid evidence as the sensible phenomena which afford the data for science?

(v) The continued Saviourhood of Jesus Christ involves not merely His survival of death, as many believe that their beloved dead have survived, but such a victory over death as enabled Him to convey to chosen witnesses

[1] This subject will be more fully discussed in the next chapter.

the certainty that He lived. We need not discuss whether the accumulated evidence of Christian experience throughout the centuries would be sufficient to maintain for us the certainty that Jesus lives, although so robust and sane a thinker as the late Dr. Dale believed that it would ;[1] but what is certain is that the primitive Christian community, overwhelmed by the tragedy of His Cross, could not have originated that certainty had there not been proofs clear and full enough to overcome all doubts and fears, for there is no evidence in any of the sources we possess that the faith of the disciples in their Master was strong enough to triumph over the failure of their hopes in His death, and to produce of itself the conviction of His victory over death. Harnack distinguishes the Easter faith and the Easter message, the belief in Jesus' victory over death and the accounts of His appearances ; but he does not show how the Easter faith could have come to be without the appearances, or having come to be could imagine the appearances.[2] Mr. Thompson discredits the tradition of the Empty Grave, and admits as authenticated in the early tradition only two appearances before Pentecost ; but he accepts the Christian conviction that Christ can be experienced as alive.[3] There seems, however, to be no alternative between rejecting the Easter faith and accepting the Easter message in its main features, if not all its details. If the former course is taken, the Easter faith must be accounted for as a subjective illusion, and Christian experience must be dismissed as deceptive. It may be impossible with only the data before us, and so much unknown that we should need to know, to harmonise the narratives about the Resurrection in the Gospels,[4] but be the difficulties what they may, the records do testify to the reality of a number of appearances of the Risen Lord to His disciples. But the Gospels are not

[1] See his book, *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels.*
[2] *Das Wesen des Christentums*, pp. 101-2.
[3] *Miracles in the New Testament*, pp. 192-5, 211.
[4] See Sanday's article on 'Jesus Christ' in Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, vol. ii. pp. 638-42, for a full discussion of these narratives.

our earliest evidence. In 1 Corinthians xv. 3-8 Paul summarises the common tradition about the appearances which he himself had received, and which in his preaching he delivered to the churches which he founded within thirty years after the death of Jesus. The witnesses of the Risen Lord to whom he appeals are Peter, James, the head of the community in Jerusalem, the whole apostolic company and five hundred brethren, ' of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.' As the last witness he offers himself, and declares that the effect of his seeing Jesus was so sudden and violent an inward change, that he describes it as an abortion. On his having seen Jesus as had those other witnesses he bases his claim to be an apostle (1 Cor. ix. 1). It is true that he claims at other times to have ' visions and revelations of the Lord ' (2 Cor. xii. 1) ; but he is doubtful whether he should glory in them, and he does not base his authority as an apostle upon them. Paul's language does not warrant the reasoning that the appearance that led to his conversion was subjective exactly as were these ' visions and revelations,' and that the appearances to the other witnesses were equally subjective. It has not yet been shown psychologically probable that in the condition of despondency or even despair in which the Christian community found itself after the death of Jesus, hallucinations of His living presence for both sight and hearing could have affected so large a number and so varied temperaments, still less that Saul the persecutor was in the frame of mind on the way to Damascus to be subjected to such a self-illusion. The moral and the religious effects of the belief in the Resurrection were such in the primitive community, and continue to be such wherever that belief is accepted, that it is impossible to believe that the belief itself is based on physical hallucinations. A subordinate and yet not unimportant question is this, whether the body of Jesus was raised, or the resurrection was spiritual. If the latter only, be it observed that the tradition of the Empty Grave must be rejected, and the appearances

themselves must be regarded as so far deceptive as they suggest a bodily resurrection. The term itself, as currently understood, did not mean a survival of the spirit only, but also the raising up of the body. Mr. Thompson rejects the tradition of the Empty Grave on the quite inadequate ground that Mark, whom he identifies with the young man whom the women saw in the grave, is the sole witness, and that he was too fond of miracles,[1] and he tries to prove that Paul is on his side. In the discussion on the Resurrection in 1 Corinthians xv. Paul indicates two modes: one for those who have fallen asleep, and another for those who are alive at the Second Advent. To the dead 'God giveth a body as it hath pleased Him' (verse 38), and here Mr. Thompson assumes that Paul regarded this spiritual body as an entirely new creation having no connection with the natural body laid in the grave, which has been dissolved; those who do not sleep will be suddenly changed, the corruptible putting on incorruption, and the mortal immortality (verses 52 and 53). Mr. Thompson very confidently decides that Paul thought of Jesus' resurrection as according to the first mode, and not the second. The natural body of Jesus remained in the grave, and saw corruption; the spiritual body was an entirely new creation.[2] Before Mr. Thompson's book appeared the writer after a careful study of the passage had reached the opposite conclusion,[3] that Paul thought of the Resurrection of Christ as so sudden a change as he anticipated at the Second Advent for those then alive. If Christ's natural body was thus transformed, was not the victory over death more complete than if it was left to see corruption in the grave? Again the foolish taunt that this is materialism may be uttered. But is it materialism to believe in the absolute sovereignty of spirit over matter, or to hold that matter, which already serves spirit as the organ of personality, cannot be so transformed as to become completely subservient to spirit?

[1] *Miracles in the New Testament*, pp. 175-6. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 168-72.
[3] See *Studies of Paul and his Gospel*, chap. vi. pp. 105-7.

IV

(i) The result of the discussion of the previous section is this, that Jesus in His moral character, His religious consciousness, His saving grace is unique and transcendent; He is not natural or explicable in the way that other men and their work can be explained, but supernatural, as according to His own self-witness, related to God and endowed by God as no other man. It has been shown further that there is an intelligible connection between His moral character and the account given of His entrance into the world in the tradition of the Virgin-birth, and that this connection makes the tradition more credible; that His saving grace in its universality and permanence involves that He lives and reigns, and that accordingly the tradition of His Resurrection is 'no cunningly devised fable' but a witness to reality; that it is not improbable that one who was what He was, and whose entrance into and exodus from earthly life was as the Christian tradition represents it, did deeds which may be in strictest accuracy described as miracles. He comes from above and beyond nature and mankind as known to our common experience. May we follow Him into the region from which He comes, or is it our wisdom to leave His person an unsolved problem? Does Christian faith need or allow a metaphysic? There are questions about the ultimate source, the essential nature, and the final purpose of the universe which the mind asks and must ask itself. Man to know himself must question himself regarding the whence, the why, and the whither of himself and mankind. Will a further inquiry into what Christ is help us to answer our questions regarding the world and man? He claimed to reveal God and redeem man, and human experience has confirmed His claim, and we cannot be content to leave Him an unsolved problem. Even the primitive Christian community had to give an answer. One of these apostolic interpretations claims

to be also an evangelical testimony. In the Fourth Gospel the doctrine of Christ is presented in the history of Jesus.

(2) The literary and historical problem of the Fourth Gospel does not fall within the writer's province in this volume.[1] The sole question with which he is concerned is this: Can the Johannine presentation of the life and work of Jesus be regarded as historical reality in the same sense and to the same extent as the Synoptic? An extreme negative criticism denies to the Fourth Gospel any value as history; it is doctrine disguised as narrative, faith posing as fact, metaphysic disporting itself as reality. The writer himself holds that it is impossible to maintain the traditional authorship by John, the son of Zebedee, and to regard the Gospel as history in the same way as the Synoptics may be so regarded. But his studies have led him to the conclusion that there is in the Gospel the testimony of an eye-witness, a Jerusalemite disciple, who was ignorant of the Galilean ministry, but informed, as were not the Synoptists, of the work of Jesus in Judæa and Jerusalem; that the Gospel as we have it has probably not come to us directly from that eye-witness, but from one of his disciples, who delighted in honouring his teacher by describing him as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' and stands in its historical contents in much the same relation to the testimony of this eye-witness as does Mark's Gospel to Peter's reminiscences, although the doctrinal elaboration of the Fourth Gospel goes very much further than any that can be detected in the Second Gospel; and that it is still possible so to separate history and doctrine as to secure trustworthy additional testimony to the course and the character of the ministry of Jesus.[2] The evidence that Westcott gives in his *Commentary* regarding the minute knowledge shown in the Gospel of times, places, customs, etc., cannot be got rid of by the assumption that a later writer, though consciously writing

[1] See Peake's *A Critical Introduction to the New Testament*, chaps. xiv.-xvii.; also Sanday's *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel.*

[2] See *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, pp. 20-34, pp. 68-87.

allegory, got up the local and temporal atmosphere with the care of a modern historical novelist, and does point to an eye-witness who knew Jerusalem intimately, but not Galilee. It is historically probable that Jesus did begin His ministry in Judæa, and, although compelled to withdraw to Galilee by the opposition of the Jewish rulers and teachers, and the untrustworthiness of the Jerusalem populace (John ii. 23-25), returned to Jerusalem and renewed His efforts there at the great feasts, when the presence in the city of a number of His fellow-countrymen, the Galileans, afforded Him the necessary protection. For on the one hand the Synoptic account of the last days in Jerusalem does presuppose that Jesus was better known there than their previous records would afford any reason for believing; and, on the other hand, it is most likely that Jesus, who was conscious of being the Jewish Messiah, and who offered Himself as such to the Jewish people, would afford the nation at the centre of its religious life an opportunity for deciding on His claims much more adequate, would make an effort to secure a favourable decision much more urgent, than the Synoptics give any evidence of. Taking the Synoptic records alone, could Jesus with truth have said in His lament over Jerusalem, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?' (Matt. xxiii. 37). If Jesus did no more to win Jerusalem than the Synoptics record, such words sound hollow. As we read the Gospel without any prepossessions against its historical character, are we not again and again made to feel that we are indeed in the presence of Jesus Himself, and that an eye-witness is telling us what he saw. To dismiss this as the realism of fiction is surely an anachronism, or transporting of modern literary methods to an ancient writing. Further, is there not throughout this Gospel an appreciation of the personality of Jesus which comes very much nearer the personal homage and devotion to the Saviour and Lord of the Christian believer than we ever meet with in the Synoptics?

Was such an appreciation possible only to the faith of a later age? Would not the historical Jesus have inspired it in a few choice spirits, who understood Him better, and loved Him more, than the disciples whose testimony has come to us in the Synoptics? Is it altogether unlikely that amid so much misunderstanding, and with so little sympathy from the companions He had chosen, Jesus did unburden His heart more freely, if there was a disciple in Jerusalem who was more receptive of, and responsive to, His truth and grace? The longer the writer studies the Gospels, the more impressed is he with the incompleteness of the Synoptics, and the need of supplementing their representations from the Fourth Gospel, and he is confident that we are warranted, in seeking to determine the historical reality of Jesus, in using the Fourth Gospel as well as the Synoptics with the more vigorous criticism that the very character of the Gospel imposes.

(3) The Gospel is doctrine as well as history, reflection as well as reminiscence; and the author even when he is giving reminiscences presents them in his own phraseology. For the manner of the teaching of Jesus, for the terms He used, and the arguments He employed, we must go to the Synoptists, and be guided by them. The difference between the Synoptic presentation and the Johannine is not accounted for, as is often maintained, by the difference between Jerusalem and Galilee, the teachers and the rulers on the one hand, and the common people on the other; for in the discourse John gives after the Feeding of the Five Thousand to the multitude in Galilee, the language peculiar to him is used (vi.); and in the controversies in Jerusalem the Synoptics record the speech of Jesus as the same as in Galilee. As the Epistles which go along with the Gospels show, the terminology is peculiar to the author, or to the circle from which these writings have come to us. It seems to be altogether unlikely that the long discussions, in which Jesus is represented as engaging with His opponents, with their frequent repetitions and their keenly controversial tone, are accurate reports of actual speeches of

Jesus; for on the one hand it is not consistent with the character of Jesus, as presented in the Synoptic Gospels, that He should be so persistent and vehement in defence of Himself, and so urgent and even intolerant in the assertion of His claims; and on the other it was natural for a disciple, thoroughly convinced, aflame with zeal for the Master's name and cause, to develop arguments for His claims, on the basis of remembered sayings, but with more direct reference to more recent challenges from his own environment. There are passages, however, in which we can trace the process by which reminiscence passed over into reflection. Take only one instance. In the interview with Nicodemus (iii. 1-10), a probable historical situation is presented. It is not unlikely that the Pharisees, anxious not to be left behind in a popular religious movement, desired to come to some understanding with Jesus, and sent Nicodemus to put out feelers; for Jesus does not treat him as an anxious inquirer, and addresses him not as an individual, but as representing a party, when He makes His uncompromising demand. Probably reminiscence ends at verse 10, and reflection begins with verse 11, as what follows is not at all appropriate to the historical occasion. As the author believed himself to be led by the spirit of truth in these reflections, for him there was no moral problem, as there is for us, in his sending forth his reflections as well as reminiscences as his testimony to Jesus.

(4) If the Gospel contains either at first hand, or more probably at second hand, the reminiscences with the reflections of an eye-witness, we can see how inevitably Christian faith asked itself questions about the person of Jesus, and tried to answer them. While in the Prologue the author seeks to commend his Christian witness to readers interested in the recent philosophy by connecting it with the common conception of the Logos, yet Harnack seems right, and Scott wrong,[1] in maintaining that the conception

[1] Compare Harnack's *History of Dogma*, Eng. trans., vol. i. p. 329 note, and Scott's *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 163-70.

of the Logos dominates the history. Not only does the term not occur again, but what the author affirms about Jesus can be adequately accounted for as his own reflections, depending on and developed out of His reminiscences. It was the overmastering impression of Jesus that he was trying to make intelligible to himself and others. If he caught up the idea of the Logos from current thought around him, it was not to interpret Jesus to himself by that idea, but to commend Jesus to those to whom the idea was true, as being for thought, and still more for life, not only all but far more than all that the Logos could be. That the author of the Fourth Gospel described Jesus as the Logos incarnate shows how great the impression the historical reality had made on him, and how great was the experience he still had of the truth and grace of Christ, that such an explanation seemed necessary to him. If from him we turn to other believers, we find a similar effect. The primitive community after the Resurrection not only renewed its belief in Jesus as Messiah, but ascribed to Him the title Jewish piety assigned to Jehovah, and called Him Lord. Paul not only shared that belief, but by his own experience of the saving power of Jesus Christ was led to develop further the idea of Sonship, given in Jesus' self-witness, and to place the Lord beside the one God in his confession of his monotheistic faith in opposition to polytheism. Jesus was for him the Man from heaven, the Son of God's love, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation, one who existing in the form of God had to empty Himself in becoming man.[1] In a few passages in the Fourth Gospel Jesus is represented as claiming pre-existence; and it is not improbable that as, in the face of opposition, He fell back on His own inward certainty of His filial relation to God, there came to Him the assurance that His relation to God had not begun in time, but was eternal as God Himself.[2] It is more intelligible from the psychological standpoint that this

[1] See *Studies of Paul and his Gospel*, pp. 105-33.
[2] See *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus*, pp. 83-7.

assurance came as a fresh intuition, and was not a continuous memory. Be that as it may, nay, even if we must not lay too great stress on the authenticity of these utterances, although it is not likely that the author would make such an affirmation without some ground in remembered sayings of Jesus, the important consideration is that those who were in contact with the historical reality of Jesus could not rest in their thought about Him till they exalted Him, not above nature and man only, but into the very being and life of God. We must reserve for the subsequent chapter on 'The Christian View of God,' the justification of this confession of the divinity of Jesus Christ the Lord.

CHAPTER V

THE CHRISTIAN SALVATION

I

(1) ONE aspect of the personality of the Lord Jesus Christ, His saving grace, has been briefly mentioned in the preceding chapter, but the fuller treatment it demands has been reserved for this. It might appear from the concluding sentences of the preceding chapter as if the course of the argument were being wantonly interrupted in order to deal with this subject; but this would be so serious a misunderstanding that it must at once be removed. Whether the Christian Church is justified in calling Jesus God depends on whether He has done and is doing for mankind what God alone can do. There are grounds for the Christian confession in the historical reality as presented in the previous chapter; but the argument cannot be regarded as complete until we have estimated fully, or as fully as we can, the worth of Jesus as Saviour and Lord to mankind. Without depreciating the logical relevancy of any of the other facts already mentioned, yet we can best reach the truth of His person through the worth of His work. This is an age that cares more for empirical evidence than for logical demonstration; and so the course of argument in this chapter is specially adapted to it. Not only so, but if our aim is not only to compel an intellectual assent to the claims of Christ, but also to constrain a practical consent to His grace and truth, it is the only method that is relevant to and effective for our purpose. We must then define what the Christian salvation is, and Christ's part in it.

(2) In seeking to define the Christian salvation we must

beware of 'the personal equation,' lest limiting ourselves unduly to our own experience we conceive what Christ has done too narrowly and one-sidedly. It is now generally agreed that the end of religion is practical and not theoretical; that if it answers the questions of the intellect, that is only incidentally in meeting the needs of the life. In the lower stages of religious development the aid of the gods is sought for natural goods, the provision of food, etc., the protection from danger, disease, death. Where morality comes into closer alliance with religion, as where the tribal deity becomes the guardian of tribal custom, it is a moral good as well that is sought. Physical evils are thought of as penalties of any breach of custom or law, and their removal is sought by confession, penitence, sacrifice. As morality becomes more inward, the state of the heart towards God and the goodness He enjoins is seen to affect the relation to God. Distrust of, or disobedience to God disturbs the confidence and the satisfaction of communion with God. Whenever this communion with God comes to be valued for its own sake, we may say that a spiritual good has emerged. Deliverance from evil, forgiveness of sin, peace with God, are the natural, moral, and spiritual good sought, in so far as man's consciousness of relation to the divine is affected by his sense of having transgressed in any way the will of God. In so far as any religion meets any of these needs it may be described in a broad use of the term as *redemptive*. But this is only the negative aspect of religion; there is a positive also. Man desires life, and ever more abounding life, physically, morally, and spiritually. He wants to be happy as well as safe, holy as well as forgiven, delighting in God as well as at peace with God. Such natural, moral, and spiritual good he might seek even if he had no sense of sin, and so far as a religion meets this desire of the soul, it may be described as *perfective*. Probably in the description of the Christian salvation the negative or redemptive aspect has often been more emphasised than the positive or perfective. We notice the evil we suffer more than the

good we enjoy; we feel more keenly deliverance from danger than bestowal of gifts; sin and judgment are realities, holiness and blessedness are ideals, and the one oppresses us at first more than the other inspires. In our present condition the deliverance of the soul seems more urgent than its development. Forgiveness must be assured before holiness can be pursued, and the assurance becomes a motive of the pursuit. There are some Christians who seem to be content with having just crossed over Jordan, leaving the wilderness wanderings behind, but are not eager to go up and possess the promised land. In some of the Christian creeds the word salvation is limited to the redemptive aspect of the Christian religion; to use the technical terms, it includes justification but not sanctification. Against so one-sided a view it is necessary to insist that the Christian salvation is not only deliverance from the death of sin, but possession of the eternal life in God.

(3) There is an error from the opposite point of view that no less needs correction. If Christian theology has sometimes appeared unduly pessimistic, there is a religious thought to-day that is improperly optimistic, at least as regards the moral realm. The doctrine of evolution is supposed to justify, if not necessitate, the assumption that the movement of mankind has been uniformly upward in morals, and so sin is to be regarded as the necessary imperfection of a morally developing personality. It is the progressive revelation of the moral ideal that condemns the moral reality so far attained; a man judges himself sinful as his moral insight advances beyond his moral attainment. A man is to be praised for his advancing conscience rather than blamed for his retarding character.[1] In dealing with the Christian doctrine of man it will be necessary to deal more fully with this question; what must here be asserted is that this theory does not correspond to moral experiences inward or outward. There is moral stagnation or decadence as well as progress in the

[1] See Orchard's *Modern Theories of Sin*, part iii.

individual and the nation observable and demonstrable. When a man interrogates his own conscience, he has to confess not only that he falls short of the ideal he recognises and approves, but that he has chosen and is choosing the lower path when the higher path was open to him, and that, despite the warnings of his conscience, he has kept to the lower path. It is simply to play tricks with reality, to suggest even that man's remorse is, as it were, his moral growing pains. If man's increasing knowledge and advancing thought should lessen his sense of sinfulness, that would be not a moral gain but loss to mankind; let such an opinion as that every man is just as imperfect as the stage of his development necessitates gain currency, and there would soon be an end of moral progress for the race. Whatever be the origin of sin in the race, and however it may be transmitted from generation to generation, sin is a real evil from which deliverance is needed. The Christian Gospel did not first of all disclose the disease of which it offered the remedy. While the conception of sin is very indistinct in many religions, and ritual neglect and moral offence are in some very often confused, yet the confession of penitence and the prayer or sacrifice for pardon is not unknown in other religions than the Hebrew, although in that religion the moral development became more and more closely allied with the religious, until the confusion of ceremonial uncleanness and moral impurity was left behind, and a genuinely moral view of sin corresponded with as completely moral a conception of God. The Fifty-first Psalm expresses a real need; and there would be moral retrogression and not progress were the reality of that need to be challenged. It is true that there are nations, as there are individuals, whose moral development has been so retarded that the Gospel has to evoke the desire which it satisfies; but this is not a proof that Christianity artificially creates necessities that it gratuitously then supplies, but only that moral progress has not been uniform, and that there are cases in which a more potent stimulus to progress is necessary than in

others. Unless we reverse all our moral judgments, the man who has little or no sense of his unworthiness must be regarded as at a lower stage than the man who is fully conscious of his failure.

(4) Even when so extreme a view is not taken, and the witness of man's moral conscience is accepted in its judgment on the abuse of freedom in doing wrong, it is argued that to this subjective judgment of man, however desirable and necessary for moral progress, there does not correspond any objective judgment of God. That sin has evil consequences, physical and social, cannot be denied; for such a denial would be a paltering with sad and stern facts. What is at least doubted, if not altogether denied, is that man's judgment of himself reproduces God's judgment on him, and that the consequences of sin are the punishment of sin willed by God in the natural or the social order. It is sometimes contended that God is so great that the good or evil of man cannot affect Him in any way, so that He should approve the right or condemn the wrong in man's doings. This conception that God is above or beyond any participation in man's moral experience is, however, open to two serious objections. Exalting God metaphysically, it degrades Him morally. Either God must be conceived as non-moral, and so incapable of any share in moral experience, or, if moral perfection is assigned to Him, it must be conceived as indifferent to moral distinctions—a contradiction. Further, in modern thought stress is laid on the divine immanence; the laws of nature express the divine wisdom, the forces of nature are the exercise of divine power; but if God be immanent in nature, He is surely still more immanent in the life of man, although, if man's personality and liberty and responsibility are duly recognised, that immanence cannot be regarded as the direct action of God in human activity, but rather as a participation of personal communion in man's moral life. The more we emphasise this immanence of God as personal in men as persons, the more impossible is it to suppose that God is not affected by man's sin and

the misery or shame it brings, or by man's goodness and the blessedness and peace that come with it. Surely it is the presence of the Divine Companion that intensifies the condemnation or the approval of conscience, for, if God is not indifferent to but participates in man's moral life, it is impossible to exclude His judgment. We may conceive that judgment, not as vindictive, but as deterrent and remedial, and yet it remains real. If God be moral perfection, and as man develops morally he is more and more constrained so to conceive God, there must be a reaction against man's sin in His personal relation with man. Man's sense of guilt, his feeling that he is resting under divine judgment, is not a vain imagination, but the necessary recognition of what his personal relation to the morally perfect God necessarily involves. Not less justified is the view that the consequences of his sin in the natural and social order are the divinely-appointed penalty for that sin; for if God be immanent in that order it must be expressive of His will, and if He react as moral perfection against man's sin, these consequences must be regarded as giving effect to that reaction. As little as we can get rid of the reality of sin, can we free ourselves from the sense of guilt.

(5) The moral conscience in regard to sin and guilt must be reinforced by the religious consciousness. It has already been pointed out that above the moral good sought in religion there is the spiritual good. In Augustine's classic sentence, 'God has made us for Himself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Him,' Christianity conceives the relation of God and man, not merely as that of Creator and creature, Sovereign and subject, but as Father and child. Within this personal relation of love between God and man, sin must be conceived not merely as disobedience to divine law, but as distrust of divine love. When that love is freely and fully offered, not to receive it and not to respond to it is sin, however respectable and conformable to law the moral life may be. Similarly guilt is differently conceived. From the moral

standpoint it is liability to the judgment of God, to the experience of the penalties imposed in the natural or social order; from the religious standpoint guilt is the sense of estrangement from God, the consciousness that the personal communion of God and man has been interrupted. The analogy of human relations must be used here, for surely human affections are at best a faint reflection of the love wherewith God loves. When a wrong has been done, and has not been repented of, not only does the person doing the wrong feel that the personal intercourse is disturbed, but the person who waits to forgive as soon as penitence is shown, feels a restraint put on the expression of his affection; and so from both sides fellowship is constrained.

(6) What then is forgiveness? It is not merely the cancelling of the penalty of sin, even if that were always possible. We must be here on our guard against introducing the artificialities of the human law-court into God's moral order. There are consequences of sin that forgiveness does not at once arrest. A converted drunkard may suffer life-long disease as a result of his former indulgences, even although his changed habits will not fail in some manner to mitigate his suffering. A saved cheat may find it very hard to recover his lost reputation. The concentration of attention in Christian theology in former times on the consequences in the future life cannot be regarded otherwise than as highly injurious. Hell is not inflicted and heaven is not conferred by divine fiat; and so divine forgiveness is not insurance against hell, or assurance of heaven. It is a man's moral and religious condition in this life that will determine his condition in the next or any other life, for in a world where God's holy love reigns there is and must be moral continuity. It would be well, therefore, if in seeking to define the Christian conception of forgiveness attention were to be altogether withdrawn from the hereafter, and the crude anticipations of heaven and hell were altogether banished from Christian thought. Supreme in importance alone is the personal relation of

God to man ; if sin and guilt disturb that relation, forgiveness must restore it. Not only must man's distrust of and estrangement from God be removed, but it must be removed in such a way that God's attitude toward the sin that has caused this distrust and estrangement shall not only not be obscured, but shall be more clearly revealed than ever. If the intimate communion of man with God is to be renewed, man must come to think of, feel toward, and so judge his own sin even as does God. Even human pardon must wait on human penitence ; for it is in penitence that he who has wronged takes up the same moral attitude to the wrong he has done as does he who pardons the wrong. When it is said that man is reconciled to God, and not God to man, what is ignored is that the relation of God and man is mutual, and involves a moral reciprocity. We may once for all dismiss as contemptible the current caricatures of evangelical theology that it represents God as implacable and vindictive, when it simply insists that moral perfection cannot be indifferent to moral differences in man, and must condemn sin even as it approves righteousness. This condemnation must be conveyed to and approved by the conscience of the forgiven in the very act of forgiveness. It is only when a man has judged his sin as God judges it, that God's judgment can cease ; for it is only then that man is so brought into accord with God that loving fellowship is restored. If it were only clearly seen and firmly grasped that forgiveness is not cancelling of outward consequences of sin, but the recovery of man to God's moral attitude to sin, and thus the restoration of the loving fellowship with God sin has disturbed, then the necessity that God's forgiveness should convey God's, and so evoke man's judgment on sin would surely be recognised.

(7) There is another conception in connection with the terms in which the Christian salvation must be stated, which is often misunderstood, and so needs careful defining, viz. sacrifice. It is to be observed that sacrifice is a universal religious institution ; the worshipper, in approach-

ing his god, brings not only his prayers, but also his offerings. There are various theories of the origin of sacrifice which need not now detain us ; [1] it probably results from several motives. Sometimes it seems to be regarded only as a gift to avert displeasure, or to secure favour, and so in return to obtain the boon craved. In some forms it is an act of communion with the deity ; by sharing a meal with the god, and so partaking of a common life in the animal offered, the worshipper sought to renew the common life between himself and his god, and so recover the benefits of that relation. In the later stages of development, when morality and religion were brought into closer relation, the sense of sin and the desire for forgiveness led to the offering of a sacrifice as a means of atonement, to avert the incurred displeasure and to secure the needed favour of the god. 'Even the gods themselves,' says Homer, 'can be moved from their purpose, even these, when any one may transgress or err, do men move from anger by sacrifice' (*Iliad*, ix.). Virgil also has the idea of substitution, 'Unum pro multis dabitur caput' (*Æneid*, v. 815). Sophocles puts into the mouth of King Œdipus the declaration, which strikes the higher note of voluntary suffering :

> 'For e'en for myriads, I suppose, one soul
> Might do this service, if its will were true.'

Many other instances might be given. In the Hebrew nation the conception of sacrifice also passed through a similar development ; but as there was a much keener sense of sinfulness and a much clearer view of God's holiness, the sacrifices of atonement (the 'sin-offering' and the 'guilt-offering') became very much more prominent. But alongside of this development there was another. The abuse of sacrifice as a substitute for righteousness, and not as an expression of penitence, led to prophetic denunciations of the popular ritualism. In the Fifty-first Psalm we have the daring thought that God does not

[1] See *The Christian Certainty amid the Modern Perplexity*, pp. 77-106, for a discussion, the results of which are implied in the brief statement above.

want animal sacrifices, the sacrifice that He desires is 'the broken and the contrite heart.' In the reaction against sacrifice without penitence the Psalmist insists on penitence without sacrifice. In the prophecy of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah (Isaiah lii. 12–liii. 11) a still higher stage of the development is reached. Here either a righteous man in his suffering is represented as a sacrifice of atonement for the salvation of the people, or the Hebrew nation is in its sufferings regarded as such an offering on behalf of mankind. Here voluntary and vicarious sacrifice is conceived as atoning. We cannot dismiss so universal a practice as animal sacrifice even as a superstition; its outward forms may offend our conscience, but we must try to appreciate the motive from which it sprang, and the need that it met. Still less can we afford to disregard such moral and religious significance as is given to it in the development of thought in the psalms and the prophets.

(8) It need hardly be said that in applying the idea of sacrifice to the death of Christ we must dismiss all conceptions of God which fall below Christ's own revelation of the Father. An angry God, a bloodthirsty God, a God who can be changed from anger to love, it would be a shame as much as to mention in any Christian view of the atonement. The Cross of Christ must not be brought down to the level of what sacrifice may have meant for pagan or Jewish worshippers; but rather in the Cross of Christ we must see the fulfilment of a desire, the satisfaction of a need, that had been vainly sought in these ways. How significant are the words of Porphyry, 'There was wanting some universal method of delivering men's souls, which no sect of philosophy had ever yet found out.' [1] How significant too is the fact to which Harnack draws attention, that wherever the Gospel of Christ has been accepted, human and animal sacrifice has ceased.[2] We must look at the dawn in the light of noonday.

[1] Quoted by Macculloch in *Comparative Theology*, p. 177.
[2] See *Das Wesen des Christentums*, p. 99.

(i) First of all, we must notice that in previous sacrifices man brought something that was of value to him, and offered it to God as a means of atonement; he offered the gift that he might win the boon of forgiveness. It is true that in the Old Testament the institution of sacrifice is represented as an act of divine grace. Any breach of the covenant with Jehovah deserved the cutting off of the offender from the chosen people, but for offences that were not a deliberate defiance of God, He Himself provided sacrifice as a means of atonement. The conception still is that man atones for his sin, although it may be an act of God's grace to accept such atonement.[1] In the Christian view, however, it is God who offers and man who accepts the atonement in Christ's Cross: man does not propitiate God, it is God who sets forth Christ in the blood as propitiatory (Romans iii. 25). We must here again beware of the error of so separating Christ from God as to represent Christ as alone offering, and God as only accepting the sacrifice, a kind Christ changing an angry God. God is in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Cor. v. 19). The Cross of Christ is God's self-sacrifice for the sin of man. The Father suffers in and with the Son the agony of Gethsemane and the desolation of Calvary. Man does not first approach God in penitence with sacrifice, but God in His sacrifice approaches man with pardon.

(ii) *Secondly*, man's sacrifice of penitence has some analogy with God's sacrifice of pardon. It is difficult for us who have only the ritual codes, and not the record of the piety expressed in these ordinances before us, to discover just how much or how little the sacrifice meant to the worshipper. It surely meant at least a sense of sinfulness, and a desire for forgiveness; whether the offerer thought of the animal offered as a substitute for himself, bearing his penalty, and so cancelling his debt, is less certain. The Psalmist (Psalm li.) at least recognises that what is valuable in sacrifice is penitence, 'the broken and the contrite heart.' That seems to him the substitute of

[1] See Schultz's *Old Testament Theology*, ii. pp. 87-9.

the penalty of the sin, and the plea for its forgiveness. In the Prophet (Isaiah lii. 12–liii. 11) there is an advance of thought. The sinful are too indifferent to be penitent; they do not offer 'the broken and the contrite heart,' for it is not theirs to offer. But the righteous Servant of Jehovah has 'the broken and the contrite heart' for the people's sins; and he willingly accepts all the suffering and the sorrow God appoints, so that by his endurance salvation may come to the sinful and now impenitent. The sacrifice is voluntary; otherwise it would have no moral and religious value. It is vicarious in two senses: it is for the sins of others that the sacrifice is made; it is for the good of others that the salvation is by the sacrifice secured. Whether the prophet was thinking of a historical personality, a martyr prophet, from whose death he expected such blessing; or this is the ideal he had before him of what his nation in its suffering might be for mankind, is a question which does not affect the moral and religious significance of the passage. It suggests a view of sacrifice that finds its perfect realisation only in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

(iii) The sacrifice was vicarious and voluntary. Even if we recognise the historical necessity of His death as a martyrdom, the seal in His blood of His fidelity in delivering His message and fulfilling His mission, despite the opposition of Jewish teachers and leaders, it remains no less true that His death was voluntary. He did not merely submit to an inevitable doom imposed by man; He surrendered Himself to the will of God. He in compassion for man and in obedience to God willed that the crime of the Jewish people should be the ransom that He offered for the many (Matt. xx. 28), the crowning act of His ministry. Not only did He will to pursue His controversy with scribes and priests to the tragic close, but He willed that the hate of man should in Him be made the means for the manifestation of the love of God. Had His death been but a martyrdom, had He not also willed that it should be a sacrifice, would it, we may with all reverence ask, have

been invested with the darkness and desolation that belonged to it? Would He not rather have died as joyously as have martyrs for His cause and name? To say that the physical conditions of His death are sufficient to account for His awful sorrow in dying, is surely to make His willing spirit too subservient to His weak flesh. Surely it is because He willed that His death should be a ransom, and not only a martyrdom, that the cup the Father gave Him (Matt. xxvi. 39) was so bitter to his taste. His death was vicarious, but this term we must understand not in the vocabulary of law, but in the language of love; not an outward substitution for mankind in death, but an inward identification of Himself with men in dying, that was His sacrifice. Himself sinless, He so loved man as to become one with mankind, and so to feel the sorrow, suffering, shame and doom of sin as His very own. All love is vicarious, and when the love of God was revealed in the grace of Jesus Christ, it took man's burden, waged man's struggle, and tasted man's death. Just as the parent has the broken and the contrite heart for the sin of the child, so Christ in His death was heart-broken for man's sin and all that it involves. This, however, is not all that constitutes His sacrifice. He died not only in compassion for man, but also in obedience to God. As much as in love for man He made Himself one with man in suffering, so much in love for the Father the Son made Himself one with the Father in His judgment on sin. One cannot escape the conviction that His 'sorrow's crowning sorrow' was that He saw in all His suffering with and for man the judgment of God on man's sin. His participation in human suffering was His submission to divine judgment. Surely His sense of God's distance from Him would not have come to Him unless He had felt Himself to be enduring to the very uttermost not only all that sin inflicted on man, but also all it involved for God. To speak of Christ as enduring God's wrath, or as punished by God, is to sink from the heights of the holy love of the Father and the Son, which offered

one sacrifice in requiring and in accepting judgment on sin.

(iv) If the question be pressed, Why must the sacrifice that saves include the judgment of sin? part of the answer has already been given. For forgiveness man must be brought to penitence, 'the broken and the contrite heart'; for the perfect fellowship of God and man man's penitence must reproduce God's condemnation of sin. The Cross does not merely show that God loves men so much that He is willing to suffer for them; for self-sacrifice that is not necessary is valueless. And a self-sacrifice that did not effect for men what they could not themselves effect would be an empty display. The Cross must be necessary, and must be seen to be necessary, if it is to show God's love and awaken man's. It is necessary to evoke man's penitence by disclosing God's judgment on sin. It exhibits the heinousness and accursedness of sin in showing how much Christ in saving men from sin suffered with and for man. If loving men as sinful involved such sorrow to Christ, how evil this sin must be in God's sight, whose mind concerning sin He revealed!

It may be urged that this, however, is only a subjective necessity; that the Cross was necessary to change man from sin to penitence. But if, as has been urged, the relation between God and man is mutual, and it is therefore necessary that man's penitence reproduce God's judgment, and so the Cross evokes the penitence because it conveys the judgment, the false antithesis of the subjective and the objective necessity disappears. The value of the Cross in its subjective influence on man must correspond to its validity in its objective testimony to God. For the loving fellowship of Father and child it is necessary for the Father to make Himself known as He is in His judgment on sin, as it is necessary for the child to show in his penitence the Father's judgment. God's self-expression in His condemnation of sin is as necessary to God as His self-expression in the forgiveness of sinners. Holy love must show itself holy as well as love. Whether the writer succeeds or not

in convincing others, his own conviction ever grows stronger that in the Cross God judges the sin that He forgives; it is God's own sacrifice of atonement.

(9) It has been necessary to discuss so fully the conceptions of sin, guilt, judgment, forgiveness and atonement, as they are so often misconceived in modern thought; and unless they are properly conceived, the Christian salvation will not be understood, although it may be experienced; for at this point we must guard against another misconception. The attention that has so far been given to making these Christian ideas intelligible may easily give the impression that the writer is falling back into the error of the evangelical orthodoxy which substituted acceptance of a plan of salvation, or a theory of the atonement for the personal experience of the saving grace of the Living Lord. It is not at all necessary for a man to understand the doctrine of the Christian salvation that he may have the experience of it, for the doctrine that is implicit in experience need not be explicit for reason. A man may be so attracted to and subdued by the love of Jesus Christ that, turning from sin to God in penitence and faith, He enjoys all the blessings of forgiveness without much understanding. But the justification of a discussion such as this is must be that the intellectual difficulties are to many a hindrance to the act of self-committal to Jesus Christ which is the condition of experiencing the Christian salvation; and it is the duty and privilege of one who has this experience, and has made it intelligible to himself in meeting and removing these intellectual difficulties, to do his utmost intellectually as well as practically to commend the Christian salvation as alone fully meeting man's moral and religious need.

II

(1) Jesus offered Himself to men as Master and Deliverer. He proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, and called men to the repentance and faith which were the conditions of entrance into the Kingdom. What-

ever eschatological, transcendent, and catastrophic aspects of the Kingdom were included in His conception, unless one does violence to the Gospel records He did call men to a present duty and offer a present good.

(i) He revealed God as Father, and called men to trust the unceasing care and unmeasured bounty of God toward all men. He rebuked the anxiety about natural goods so prominent in paganism; and as regards this lower element in religion He taught, on the one hand, that the human heart should not attach itself to these things, and, on the other, that God could be trusted to provide for and protect those who made His purpose their supreme concern.[1] The Christian apostle is repeating Christ's own teaching when he insists, on the one hand, that the believer is unaffected in his relation to God in Christ by any outward circumstances, for from that love nothing can sever him, and when he affirms, on the other hand, that 'all things work together for good to those who love God.'[2] The Christian salvation delivers men from the dominating desire for, and from the distressing anxiety about, natural goods, about which religion at its lowest stage of development is concerned, in a twofold way. It displaces the desires for natural goods by the aspiration for the moral and spiritual good; and it removes the anxiety consequent on these desires by the assurance of God's providence. God's Fatherhood does not warrant either the petition or the expectation that our wishes shall move God's will, but secures our submission to and confidence in the goodness of that will. This is an element in the Christian salvation to which it is the merit of Ritschl to have called attention, although the expression he has given to his thought is not the happiest or fittest.

(2) Jesus offered the forgiveness of sin, and as Son of Man claimed the authority to forgive sin (Mark ii. 5, 9-11). That He offered proved that man needed forgiveness. There is no warrant in Jesus' teaching for the common assumption that He took a less serious view of man's

[1] See Matthew vi. 19-34. [2] See Romans viii. 26-39.

moral and religious condition than did the apostle Paul. He had not, as Paul had, the sinner's experience of helpless and hopeless struggle against evil.[1] But He regarded sin rather from the standpoint of the Father-God. For Him sinners were lost and needed to be sought and saved.[2] It was not by His words alone that He gave the assurance of forgiveness. The sinful woman showed a love overflowing with thankfulness for forgiveness before the assurance in words was given. That was a reassurance in view of the censorious Pharisee's challenge.[3] As in His Sonship He conveyed to men the certainty of God's Fatherhood, so in His grace in holding intercourse with sinners He imparted the assurance of God's forgiveness. Whom He received into His companionship God accepted into His fellowship. His grace both awakened penitence and faith and bestowed forgiveness.

(3) In one utterance which is found only in Matthew's Gospel (xi. 28-30), but which cannot on that account be regarded as spurious, for it evidences its own genuineness—the invitation to the labouring and the heavy laden—Jesus meets still another need of the soul, He offers deliverance from another evil. There seems little doubt whom He had in view; not 'the babes,' on the one hand, who welcomed His grace, although they had not felt to the full their need of it, nor 'the wise and the prudent,' on the other, who were self-conceited, and self-righteous, and so self-satisfied; but men like Saul of Tarsus, whose inner life is depicted so vividly and tragically in Romans vii. 7-25, men for whom the moral and religious life was a struggle and a burden, who aspired to a holiness they could never attain, and a fellowship with God which because of their moral failure seemed ever denied to them. As His disciples, followers, and yoke-fellows they would learn the meekness and lowliness of heart, the trust in and surrender to God which would make the burden of religion light and the yoke of morality easy, and so they would find rest unto their souls. This claim the experience of

[1] See Romans vii. 7-25. [2] See Luke xv. [3] Luke vii. 47-50.

the saints has confirmed. Did not Paul say that he could do all things through Christ strengthening him, and that in Christ God had given him the victory ?[1] As the Church experienced after the Resurrection and Pentecost, the companionship of Jesus was continued in the presence of the Living Christ and the power of His Spirit. Explain it psychologically as we may by 'the expulsive,' and we must add also 'the impulsive power of a new affection,' the love of Christ constraining us (2 Cor. v. 19), the Christian salvation does include deliverance from the power and the love of sin, and endowment with a *holy enthusiasm*[2] and a *holy energy*, so that sinners are becoming saints. Both the religious problem of fellowship with God and the moral problem of holiness of life are solved in Christ.

(4) During His earthly ministry Jesus did bestow on men the forgiveness of sin and the power of holiness ; but yet He had a baptism to be baptized with, and how was He straitened until it was accomplished (Luke xii. 50). He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and He foresaw that the crowning deed of His ministering would be to give His life a ransom for many (Matt. xx. 28). His disciples were impatient whenever He began to speak to them of His death, and the very general terms in which alone His repeated announcements of His coming passion have been preserved for us in the Gospels show how little the disciples remembered, because how little they were interested.[3] It is not a mere guess, but an inference from the data offered us in the Gospels, that Jesus did speak more fully of His death than is recorded, and that He would have said more, had the disciples not been so unsympathetic and even hostile. The institution of the memorial act shows the importance Jesus attached to His death ; and in the words of appointment of the ordinance there is no good ground for doubting that He represented His death as the sacrifice of the new covenant, one of the

[1] See Philippians iv. 13 and 1 Corinthians xv. 57.
[2] See Bartlet's 'The Acts' (*Century Bible*), p. 386-8.
[3] See Mark viii. 31, ix. 31, x. 32-4.

blessings of which was the forgiveness of sin.[1] Not Paul only, but all the New Testament writers regard the death of Christ as an atoning sacrifice; and, as current Jewish opinion does not adequately explain this unanimity of view, we are justified in inferring that this was a view Jesus Himself bequeathed to the community He had founded.[2] While it must be admitted that the Cross has been a stumbling-block and foolishness to many thinkers, even within the Christian Church, yet it has proved the power and the wisdom of God unto salvation (1 Cor. i. 23, 24) to a multitude of saints; and religious revival in the Church has again and again followed on the renewal of the preaching of Christ crucified. An attempt has already been made to meet the intellectual difficulty which the doctrine of the Atonement presents to many minds to-day. Here the fact may be confidently affirmed that the realisation of Christ on His Cross has been probably the most potent influence in producing 'the broken and the contrite heart,' and the faith that saves. Experimentally the sacrifice of Christ has proved the channel of the richest blessings from God to man, for it has both condemned sin and conveyed the assurance of forgiveness. In it the Fatherhood of God has been revealed as love unto self-sacrifice, and so through it the spirit of sonship has been awakened in man unto absolute confidence and entire submission unto God.

(5) The feature of the work of Christ which distinguishes Him from all other teachers and leaders of the souls of men is that His saving grace was not limited to His earthly ministry, and that it does not survive merely as a posthumous influence. The primitive community had experience of the Living Lord, and that experience has continued in the Christian Church until to-day. Unless the most sincere and intense Christian experience is an illusion, the fellowship of the Living Christ can be enjoyed to-day. It is

[1] See Mark xiv. 24, Matthew xxvi. 28, Luke xxii. 20; cf. 1 Corinthians xi. 25.

[2] See *Mansfield College Essays*, pp. 69-88, for a discussion of contemporary Jewish opinion.

not history or doctrine about Him that is believed for the saving of the soul; it is He Himself as loving, gracious, and mighty Saviour who is experienced. Without entering here on the full argument by which the reasonableness of this belief concerning Him can be shown,[1] it is sufficient to condense it into a sentence; the absolute validity of His revelation of God, and the absolute value of His redemption of man warrant the conviction that His work, bound up indissolubly with His Person, will be permanent and universal, not as a cherished memory, not as a transmitted influence, but as a personal activity. But even if we could not form such an argument, the Christian experience has been too persistent and it is too general to be dismissed as illusive.

(6) This continued presence and activity of Christ in Christian experience does not merely repeat the characteristics of His earthly ministry. There is no sensible evidence of it, but the proof of its reality is in changed lives. Unless where as in Paul there is keen spiritual vision, that presence is not realised with the distinctness which bodily sight would give, and the record of the Gospels is invaluable to Christian experience in giving content to the presence that is felt. Even when there is not a distinct consciousness of personal communion, there is the sense of possessing and being possessed by the Spirit of God. When the primitive community realised that Christ was risen, lived, and reigned, a holy enthusiasm and energy possessed all believers (Acts ii. 1-4), and so it is still. It may be only occasionally that there are the experiences similar to Pentecost, where the whole personality seems to be mastered by the Divine Presence; but in the Christian life, which is no mere orthodoxy, formalism or legalism, there is a sure and calm sense of the indwelling and inworking of the Spirit of God, as faith is exercised in the grace of Jesus Christ.

(7) Such an experience carries with it the certainty of a glorious and blessed immortality. The Resurrection of Christ is pledge and pattern of the believer's victory over

[1] See *The Christian Certainty*, pp. 214-29.

death. The present life in and with Christ is already the eternal life, a life of such moral and religious quality, of such intimate filial relationship to the eternal God that its interruption or destruction by death is unthinkable. As the Hebrew saint drew from his fellowship with Jehovah the assurance that He would not be suffered to perish,[1] so the Christian believer, who is Christ's, can say confidently in the face of death itself, 'I live,' because 'Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii. 20).

III

(1) Such in brief outline is the Christian salvation, which meets fully man's natural, moral, and spiritual need. The Apostolic Church generally, and Paul especially, concentrated attention on the death and rising again: that Christ died for our sins and rose again according to the Scriptures, that was the common tradition, that was the earliest creed. But that within the Christian community there were some who cherished the memory of the earthly life and teaching of Jesus is witnessed by our Gospels, which show that the tradition of the ministry of Jesus was valued, even while in preaching the death and the rising again were kept in the forefront. The Epistle of James was described by Luther as an 'epistle of straw,' because it did not contain the doctrine that Luther valued most, and yet there is no New Testament writing that shows so many close resemblances to the teaching of Jesus. It is necessary that the Christian Church should declare the Apostolic Gospel with its emphasis on the two facts, the death and the rising again; and it would be indeed a mutilated Gospel which did not present as the object of saving faith Christ Crucified and Christ Risen. But it must be recognised that there are many to-day who are attracted by the earthly ministry of Jesus, and find it difficult to accept the Apostolic Gospel. We must beware of denying their share in the Christian

[1] See Psalm xvi. 9-11, xvii. 15.

salvation. They have the assurance of the loving care and bounty of the Heavenly Father, and of the forgiveness of sin; and if, because not able to believe in the fact of the Resurrection, they cannot in the labour and burden of the higher life for God and goodness rejoice in the personal companionship of Jesus Christ, they have at least the inspiration of His example, so that if in meekness and lowliness of heart they take the yoke and the burden of His filial trust in and surrender to God as Father, they may find rest unto their souls. So much of the Christian salvation it seems to the writer it might be possible to experience even without acceptance of the full Apostolic Gospel. Needless to say he himself claims and rejoices in the complete Christian salvation by a Saviour who died for him, and a Lord who lives in him; but in these days, when thought seems to be obsessed by an aversion to anything that savours of the supernatural, the attitude of the Christian apologist especially must be one of great patience and large tolerance. But even when there is not this aversion to the supernatural, and no insuperable intellectual difficulty would be felt about accepting the Apostolic Gospel, there are some believers who are more at home in the Gospels than in the Epistles; and of them it must be admitted that there is a real contact of their souls with Christ, and that, so far, they do experience His saving grace. Many who do not stop at the record of the earthly ministry find the Gospels the easiest approach to the Epistles: as they appreciate the historical Jesus they apprehend the living Christ; from walking with Him in Galilee they pass to sitting with Him in the heavenly places. There are many paths of faith to the true and living way of grace.

(2) There are different types of Christian experience, as one or other element in the Christian salvation is most highly valued.

(i) There is the *mystical* type, for which intimate personal communion with God through the living Christ is life's highest good; so long as Christ is not set aside as mediating

the soul's communion with God this piety is Christian. As history has shown, its danger is that an amorous relation to the man Jesus takes the place of the soul's surrender to the holy love of God in His saving grace; the records of mediæval piety read sometimes more like romance than religion.

(ii) There is the *speculative* type, for which the revelation of God by Christ is of chief value as affording a clue through the labyrinth of the problems of thought. Christ saves the intellect as well as the conscience, and He does answer the questions of the mind as no philosophy can; in this light we can see light clearly. But if only a metaphysical formula such as the affinity of God and man, or the immanence of God in the world, is snatched up from the treasures of His truth, and no personal relation of faith in His grace is cherished, the soul gives Him much less than His due homage.

(iii) There is the *practical* type, which finds in His teaching and His example a moral guide, and regards obedience or imitation as the chief gain from His person and His work. Jesus is the pattern of the holy life, but that the pattern may be reproduced, He must be experienced as the power that breaks the bondage of sin, that strengthens for the victory of good. He cannot be fully accepted and obeyed as Teacher and Example unless He is also trusted as Saviour, and, having saved, owned as Lord.

(iv) There is the *evangelical* type, which lays the stress on His atoning death and His saving grace. This view has reached the very centre of the Christian revelation and redemption; but from that centre it has often drawn far too narrow a circumference. The atoning death has been interpreted legalistically; the saving grace has been narrowed down to deliverance from the future penalty of sin; the spiritual communion, the intellectual illumination, the moral transformation that Christian faith can and does bring have often been absent from what boasts itself the distinctively evangelical type of piety. The

Christian salvation includes the assurance of forgiveness as one of the most needed and most highly prized gifts of the Divine grace; but it includes also the child's trustful and thankful fellowship with the heavenly Father, the seer's growth in the truth as it is in Jesus until in that truth he finds the world made luminous in the light of God, the saint's progress in holiness from the motive of the constraining love of Jesus, and in the measure of His enabling grace; and because it includes all this in the present life, it includes also the unshakable certainty of a blessed and a glorious immortality. This Christian salvation is not a speculation, or an aspiration merely; but it has been in varying measure the experience of the multitude that no man can number.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF GOD

I

(1) As the argument of this volume enters on a new phase at this point, the results of the previous discussion may be briefly summarised, and the intention of the subsequent discussion be as briefly indicated. The theologians of the Reformation distinguished the *formal* and the *material principle* in theology; the Bible was the one, and the doctrine of justification by faith was the other. A similar distinction may be applied to the contents of this volume. Hitherto we have been dealing with the reality of religion from its earliest beginnings to its culmination in the Christian salvation. In describing and commending the Christian experience it has been impossible to exclude doctrine altogether, but nevertheless the primary intention has been to track the ways by which God has given Himself in truth and grace to man, and man has found himself in God in faith, hope, love. We have been mainly concerned with religion, but the religion implies a theology; certain intellectual conceptions are implicit in the Christian experience; our present task is to make these explicit. The standpoint of the older evangelical orthodoxy put the creed before the experience, made the theology the productive factor in the religion, and accordingly spoke of a *saving knowledge*. In Scotland instruction and an examination in the Shorter Catechism preceded admission to the membership of the Church. Our standpoint now is that as life precedes biology, so religion must come before theology; a man must be saved by Christ before He can think of God or himself in the Christian way.

(2) Jesus claimed to know and make God known as Father, and the Christian view of God is that God is love, and that in relation to man love may be described as Fatherhood. The certainty of Jesus may inspire a like confidence in the Christian believer; and he may even maintain that confidence, however much that conception may be challenged by the current thought which is pressing in upon his mind. Yet Christian Apologetics cannot take up that attitude, but must endeavour to accept the challenge of thought, and to show that this conception is the most reasonable. Within the limits of this volume there must be selection of topics to be discussed, and so the writer will not attempt here to undertake the task of *philosophical theism*, and to show against agnosticism or scepticism that God can be known, or against materialism or such a materialistic monism as Haeckel's that matter-in-motion does not account for life or mind, order or progress in the world, even although he is almost daily engaged in the discussion of these topics in his work as a teacher.[1] But against a pantheistic tendency which identifies God and the world, and so denies God's personality, and a semi-pantheistic thought which in its dread of deism hesitates about assigning personality to God, he will endeavour to show that the Christian belief in God's Fatherhood does imply a personal God, transcendent as well as immanent in the world.

(i) Man as personal, a mind that thinks, a heart that feels, a will that acts, a self that goes out of itself to give itself to and find itself in other selves in love, assumes that in his communion with God he is related to personal reality; that mind apprehends mind, heart responds to heart, and will is in alliance with or opposed to will; that the self aspiring to be satisfied with the love of God is met by a self that loves. The writer in using the popular terminology does not of course commit himself to the 'faculty' psychology, as though mind, heart, and will were separate entities contained in the self. Personality

[1] See Rashdall's *Philosophy and Religion.*

is *unity* and *identity* throughout, but we may distinguish the functions of thinking, feeling, and willing, and the complex function, embracing all the simpler, of loving. But if man thinks, and cannot but think, of God as personal, he does not think of God as a person limited and imperfect as himself. God's mind thinks truth, not error, His heart feels blessedness and not misery, His will acts holily and not sinfully, His love is perfect. To avoid speaking of God as personal, some writers use a phrase such as the infinite and eternal Spirit of truth, blessedness, holiness, love; but this is simply a meaningless phrase. Truth implies the subject that thinks, blessedness the subject that feels, holiness the subject that wills, love the subject that gives itself, and finds itself in other subjects. 'Spirit' means nothing and can mean nothing but 'self' or 'personality' or 'subject.' Man in thinking of God as personal, but not as imperfect and limited as himself, necessarily thinks of God as transcendent as well as immanent. A sense of dependence on a power greater than man possesses, and greater than the natural forces, which man can but partially control and direct, is one of the simplest and earliest elements in religion, and it is not left behind as an antiquated superstition as man's religion becomes more intelligent. The sense of the infinite and absolute may be more distinctly defined in philosophy than in piety, but it does not vanish into nothingness. Finite and infinite, relative and absolute, are categories from which human thought cannot escape. The will and the mind that accounts for and explains the Universe as force and law, cannot be conceived as itself finite and relative. If God is only the Universe looked at from another point of view, the conception of God is otiose, as it explains nothing. But for the religious consciousness, reinforced by the philosophical intellect, not only is this metaphysical transcendence a necessity of thought, still more is the moral transcendence of God necessary. God must be thought of as not only stronger than the physical forces in which His will is exercised, and wiser than all the

natural laws in which His mind is expressed, but as better than man's loftiest ideals of, or his largest aspirations after, perfection. It is true that in ancient Greece the gods were represented as of like passions with men; but Greek religion has contributed nothing to the spiritual progress of mankind, and was subjected as morally injurious to censure by the philosophy which has furthered man's intellectual progress. In religion there must be reverence for, and submission to, as well as dependence on God; and it may be confidently affirmed that for religion God must be personality, transcendent as well as immanent.[1]

(ii) The tendency of modern philosophy is also evidence that personality is the highest category of thought. The absolute idealism of Hegel, which developed only one aspect of the Kantian philosophy, the *Critique of the Pure Reason*, was an intellectualism in which man's moral ideals and his religious aspirations were sacrificed to his speculative interests; life was made the victim of logic. In *pragmatism* there is the inevitable reaction, which is quite as one-sided. Truth is an element of life, as well as blessedness, holiness, or love, and we must not assume a permanent divorce of head and heart, as though only relative truth must be allied with practical interests. If man is to interpret the Universe at all, it must be the whole man; *personalism* seems to the writer the one adequate philosophy, although we have not yet had a master-mind to give it its due place. Does not Eucken's *activism* at least suggest that it is only as man develops his personal life (the term he uses is *spiritual*), that he realises his affinity to and communion with the personal life, that is the ultimate reality? Does not Bergson's idea of *creative evolution* at least break the bar of that *mechanical naturalism* that treated the Universe as a fixed quantity, a finished article, and so make us look beyond and above the Universe as it now is to what is still to be? His *élan vital* suggests the transcendent as well as the immanent force or law. In the movements of

[1] See *The Christian Certainty*, chap. x.

modern philosophy there is for the writer a promise of reinforcement of the Christian view of God as personal, transcendent as well as immanent.

(3) What is the objection to thinking of God as personal ?

(i) It is said that man is conscious of himself as subject only in contrast with the world as object, and develops his personality only in his reaction upon that world. It is true that in our thought subject and object are correlative, and we cannot think the one without the other ; but is there not a sense of self realised especially in the feeling of pleasure or pain, prior to and condition of that contrast of subject and object ? If there were not, how and why should we identify self with the subject and distinguish it from the object ? Again, it is true that we realise our own personality as we gain knowledge of and secure mastery over the world ; we need the constant stimulus of our environment for the exercise of our powers. But is there not again a self-consciousness, an inner life, a realisation of our own personality within, in which we distinguish ourselves from and become less dependent on the world around ? Does not the development of personality depend on the measure in which we have a life of our own, memories, aspirations, reflections, less and less determined in its course by outward things ? Does not personality aim at, and strive for, self-sufficiency, independence of the world around ? That purpose is never fully attained, but it may surely be taken as an indication of the ideal of personality which is but partially realised in us. We may heartily endorse Lotze's statement at the conclusion of a similar argument, that these limitations belong to imperfect personality in man, but do not attach to the conception of personality as such.[1]

(ii) It is urged again that the predicates of infinite and absolute cannot be attached to personality. If by *infinite* we mean unlimited, and by *absolute* unrelated, then assuredly we cannot speak of God as personal if He is infinite and absolute in this sense. But if that be the

[1] See Lotze's *Microcosmus*, Book IX. chap iv.

only meaning of the terms, can we speak of God at all? Are we not left with a mere blank? If God is everything-in-general He is nothing-in-particular, and we can say nothing about God at all. *Agnosticism* is the logical outcome of such a mode of thought. But if we define *infinite* as self-limited, and *absolute* as self-related, the only sense of the words that conveys anything to our intelligence, the difficulty entirely disappears. For is not the ideal of personality just self-knowledge, self-reverence, self-control, or, in a word, self-sufficiency? We can think of God as personal choosing His own limitations, and forming His own relations, not limited or related by anything that is not willed by Himself. If the existence of the world conditions the exercise of His power and the expression of His wisdom, He has Himself willed that that world should be. If, still more, the existence of free, responsible persons, who may will in accordance with or opposition to His purpose in His world, conditions His fulfilment of His will, it is He who has willed the wills which may oppose His. As we shall afterwards see in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity God is not conceived as a unit, but a unity in manifold conditions in Himself, and so self-limited and self-related.

(iii) It is as ideal personality that man conceives God; he thinks of God as all that in his best moments he aspires to be, and better, but not other than his best. Now if we look more clearly at these ideals we shall see more clearly how each implies this infinitude and absoluteness as self-sufficiency. Is not truth reality that is consistently rational, completely intelligible, being the perfect expression of thought? Is not blessedness feeling that is perfectly satisfying? Is not holiness aspiration fully realised in attainment? Is not love the free giving and the full finding of self in others? Mind, heart, will, self perfectly realised, object and subject in perfect accord, that is ideal personality; and that can only be when all limitations are self-imposed, and all relations are self-determined, not as the contradiction but as the condition of self-

realisation. The more thoroughly we think out man's ideals as rational, emotional, moral, and social, the more will infinitude and absoluteness, rightly defined, appear consistent with ideal personality in God.

(iv) One more objection may be mentioned. From the standpoint of physical science, and the *naturalism* which is the more or less deliberate philosophy from that standpoint too exclusively held, it is urged that man as a part of nature is too insignificant and unimportant in the Universe to be warranted in thinking of the essential reality, the ultimate cause, and the final purpose of that Universe as having any resemblance to himself. This is an *anthropomorphism* as absurd as it is impudent. This scepticism, however, regarding the competence of the human mind should begin sooner. Science assumes that the mind of man can know and understand the Universe; the categories it uses are themselves *anthropomorphic*, cause and law and organism get meaning only from human self-consciousness. The mind that interprets the world, that so apprehends its greatness as to be led to depreciate its own littleness, is not and cannot be merely a part of the world, incapable of finding out the meaning and the worth of the whole. The argument is self-destructive, for it challenges the competence of the very mind which is capable of thinking the challenge. If man is to be forbidden to think of God anthropomorphically, what are the consequences for man's own life? All his ideals, which claim authority as objective because expressing the supreme reality of existence, fall in value as subjective, as a reaching for something beyond his grasp, a self-exaltation into the void. His religion especially becomes a self-illusion, for he cannot relate himself to the incognisable and inconceivable; an altar to a truly *unknowable God* would be man's mocking of himself. Especially would the conception of Incarnation be an absurdity, as God, if inconceivable as personal, could not express Himself in a personal humanity. The objection to assigning personality to God cuts at the very roots of man's intellectual, moral,

and religious life, and makes the Christian faith meaningless and worthless; and yet thinkers professing to be Christians talk of *super-personal* deity.[1]

II

(1) But Fatherhood implies more than personality; it implies perfect personality expressive and communicative of itself in love. Does the Universe as we know it reveal perfect personality as its ultimate cause and final purpose? This question at once brings us face to face with the problem of evil. The alternative that seems forced on our thought by all the physical evil or pain, and still more by the moral evil or sin, is this, that if God is good, willing only the happiness and the holiness of man, He is either not wise enough to devise the means for that end, and so is not *omniscient*, or He is not strong enough by the means He devises to bring about the end he desires, and thus is not *omnipotent*. J. S. Mill preferred to surrender God's power rather than God's goodness; but held that one or other attribute must be abandoned.[2] The Christian faith maintains both. The Christian would have no assurance of salvation did he not believe in God's goodness; and he could not maintain the certainty of his salvation had he any doubts of God's power. A salvation contingent on God's power not disappointing His goodness would never have inspired the songs of the saints. The Christian cannot be a pessimist, even in Mill's modified sense; that divine power fails to realise the purpose of divine goodness. Neither is he an optimist in the sense that has so unwarrantably been put on Browning's words, 'God 's in His heaven, all 's right with the world.' The world as it now is is not the best of all possible worlds for the Christian, for it is a world that needs redemption from sin and consequent evil (this is the pessimistic aspect of his faith), and it is a world that is being redeemed (this is the optimistic aspect of his faith). His attitude is best expressed

[1] See also Illingworth's *Personality, Human and Divine.*
[2] See his *Three Essays on Religion: Theism*, part ii.

by the term *meliorism*; the worst is being turned to the best; but the seriousness of the problem for Christian faith is seen in the Christian belief that the divine sacrifice in Christ is the necessary means of the human salvation.[1]

(2) From the Christian standpoint great stress is laid on the distinction between physical and moral evil, although a connection is not altogether denied.

(i) It is impossible to maintain that all physical evil is the result of moral, as the catastrophes of nature are not and cannot be represented as the results of man's moral depravity. Christian theology to-day has abandoned the standpoint once generally held that earthquake, volcano, flood, famine, pestilence could all be regarded as direct divine judgments on man's sin. For, first of all, the physical connection of all these disasters is definitely known; secondly, we have learned the lesson from Jesus not to judge, so that we may not be judged (Matt. vii. 1; Luke xiii. 1-5); and thirdly, such divine judgments involving innocent and guilty alike, falling sometimes where the human guilt seems far less than in other cases where these are withheld, would raise a still more serious problem about the justice and goodness of God's dealing with man.

(ii) But even where no causal connection between physical and moral evil can be affirmed, we must not assert that the physical evil is meaningless in relation to man's discipline and development. As has already been indicated, man's personality is realised in relation to the world around. It is by knowledge of nature's laws and mastery of nature's forces that man advances in civilisation and culture. Were the struggle with nature less severe, the discipline of human faculty would be less effective. Where nature is most bountiful man is usually lazy; it is where nature must be wrestled with to yield her treasures that man advances in industry, science, and social organisation. Nature's severity is thus more beneficent than her indulgence.

[1] See Fairbairn's *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, Book 4, chaps. iii., iv.

(iii) There is one order of nature, and the same forces under the same laws which produce the physical catastrophes also produce all the physical benefits which nature bestows on man. As far as our knowledge goes, only a constant divine intervention, an unending series of miracles, could produce only physical good without physical evil. We take notice of the catastrophes, we pass over the benefits. The exceptional evil bulks much more largely than the constant good. We may say, if we will, that a greater wisdom could have devised, and a greater power could have produced, a Universe in which good had no attendant evil; but that is surely the claim of a greater knowledge and a deeper insight than we can arrogate to ourselves. If we can find more good than evil in the course of nature, and if we can see that even the evil serves man's good in furthering his growth, the problem is not left altogether insoluble.

(iv) There are evils, however, that we can and must connect directly with human sin as error, for wilful ignorance must be regarded as morally blameworthy, and preventable suffering as involving moral responsibility. Why should cities be built close to volcanoes? In regions visited frequently by earthquake why should massive stone buildings be erected instead of the lighter structures which have been found more suitable? Why by proper irrigation and preservation of forests should not the droughts that are the most common cause of famine be avoided? Why should wealth be squandered on armaments which might be profitably employed in agricultural development? Why by neglect of sanitation should pestilences be encouraged? If we were to eliminate all the physical evil due to ignorance, indifference, or indolence, how greatly the sum of human misery so caused would be reduced! Such an education of humanity may seem very expensive, but who can be confident that other means could produce the same results, or that the results are not a justification of the means?

(v) Physical evil further results from deliberate wicked-

ness. 'Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn.' The Armenian, the Congo, and even the Putumayo atrocities have led to a hasty challenge of God's goodness; but they are altogether due to human sin in the perpetrators, and an indifference that is criminal in those who, on hearing of them first of all, did not take vigorous enough measures to put an end to them. Many a man brings disease and death on himself and on his dependents by his sensual self-indulgence. The sins of the fathers descend in physical evil to the children, and the members of a society suffer from the wrongdoing of some of their number. If it be urged that the suffering of the innocent with the guilty is unjust, it may be asked, how could there be any human society at all, if there were not these close relationships, which are not only the channels of evil but also of good? Without heredity, how would one generation benefit another? Without the unity of a society, widening as it is into the solidarity of humanity, could the common good grow? That there is progress; that humanity is becoming more a reality, and less an abstraction—this is a proof that human relationships, bringing the actuality of evil, hold in them a still greater possibility of good, which is being realised.

(vi) There is in what appears physical evil alone, a contributory element from the human consciousness. Physical dissolution existed before man came into the world; as a physical organism man is necessarily subject to that same end; but, as death is for the human conscience, is it not a terror and a darkness because man is conscious of guilt, distrustful of God, apprehensive of judgment? For the Christian believer in the measure of his faith death has been swallowed up in victory. So, as a man advances morally and religiously, physical evil is more and more subservient to the higher good he seeks; he discovers that it is well for him that he has been afflicted; the dross of an earthly loss can be transmuted into the gold of a heavenly gain. As a man knows, trusts, and

loves God, 'all things work together for good,' and for him even physical evil is no challenge of God's goodness.

(3) While the problem of physical evil cannot be simply resolved into the problem of moral evil, its scope is very considerably reduced by the recognition of not only the connection of moral with physical evil, but also the subordination of physical evil to moral good in the ways already indicated. We must now turn to the problem of moral evil. If man is free, God is not directly responsible for the abuse of that freedom by man, or the consequences of that abuse. In the next chapter we must present the Christian argument for human liberty and responsibility, and must here assume the reality. As the Creator, who has freely willed that freedom in man, God is responsible (and we may say that with all reverence) for the final issue for the human race of that fateful gift of freedom. We cannot rid ourselves of the problem by simply casting the blame on man, for the Creator has a responsibility for His creatures. Still less can we evade the difficulty when we are seeking to affirm that the Creator is Father. Two considerations may be here urged.

(i) We cannot conceive of the relation of man to God as child to Father, trusting, loving, serving without freedom. As a personal relation of man to God, it involves personal liberty and responsibility. Automata, cunningly constructed by divine omnipotence, could not have any moral or religious value for God; only free personalities can. But freedom involves the possibility of evil as well as good. The will that chooses trust can also choose distrust. The heart that loves can also hate. Holiness is by the rejection of sin. How could there be any moral and religious communion of God and man without freedom, and how freedom without the possibility of sin? Had God excluded the possibility of sin in man's freedom in the making of the world, even His omnipotence could not have given any moral or religious value to man, and through him to the world. Which is better: a world without sin because without personality, or a world with

sin in which personal relations of man to God are possible ? Can there be any doubt about the answer from any standpoint in which moral and religious values are recognised at all ? and it is only from such a standpoint that sin is a problem at all.

(ii) The possibility of sin having become actuality, what should we expect from divine goodness ? The immediate withdrawal of the freedom abused, and the extinction of the personality created, and so the defeat of God's purpose in man at the very start ? Or, what we do find, the constant working of God's Spirit against the sin of man in the customs and laws of human society, in the individual conscience, in inward remorse for and outward retribution on sin, in a providence that is working against evil and making for good, in a purpose of redemption consummated in Jesus Christ, in which the divine sacrifice for sin so awakens man's penitence, reproducing God's judgment and his faith, receiving God's forgiveness, that sin is at last defeated in the soul of man, and he turns from sin to God. It is in the Cross, where God suffers for sin to save from it, that His responsibility is accepted and discharged. Only the belief in the Christian redemption offers the solution of the problem of moral evil.

(4) If for Christian faith the problem of moral evil is being thus solved, not by a theoretical demonstration that 'evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound,' but by a practical experience of deliverance from sin unto God, even the problem of physical evil becomes less intolerable. In the considerations that have already been advanced, the writer does not pretend even to himself that he has offered a complete solution of the problem of physical evil ; there are what seem to us premature deaths, in which the abounding promise of a life is unfulfilled ; there are agonising diseases to which the human frame is subject, for which even medical science can find no adequate explanation ; there are tragedies and miseries that seem to go far beyond the necessary consequences of human ill-desert ; and in face of these silence seems more fitting

than speech. There are 'clouds and darkness round about Him,' even though there are evidences for the belief that 'righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne.' A complete solution is not possible, nor necessary; if there be a sufficient solution to warrant the expectation that when we cease to see as in a mirror darkly, and see face to face, there will be a complete solution. Here we walk by faith, and not sight; we are saved by hope. Having experienced the solution of the moral problem in himself, the Christian has warrant in believing that it can and will be solved in others; and if God can and is solving the problem of moral evil, faith is possible that the problem of physical evil will also be solved. *Solvitur ambulando*: the speculative must wait on the practical solution. Höffding has suggested, in dealing with the *Problems of Philosophy*, that its four problems of consciousness, knowledge, reality, and value cannot be solved without an insoluble remainder, because the world itself is still in the making, and the interpretation can be completed only with the reality. Christian faith must be reinforced by Christian hope. The solution of the problem of physical or moral evil in the individual life is excluded without the hope of immortality. Sin, sorrow, suffering, death are not explicable within the range of this earthly life. As this hope has comforted and sustained the soul, so in dealing with these problems it cannot be left out of account. The promise unfulfilled here in those removed by premature death, has we may confidently believe its fulfilment hereafter, and it will be a far greater and better. The affliction would not seem either light, or for a moment, did it not work out an exceeding, even an eternal, weight of glory. For humanity generally there is no solution of the problem of physical and moral evil, unless we can believe that there is a progress towards the coming Kingdom of God. We are witnessing the solidarity of humanity becoming more and more a reality; a common conscience is, although too slowly, taking possession of mankind; through missionary

labour the Christian faith is spreading among all nations. The glory of the day is not yet upon us, but we catch glimpses of the dawn that justify faith, reinforced by hope, that the Father's goodness will be at last fully revealed.

III

(1) The perfect personality of God in truth, blessedness, holiness and love—in a word, the Fatherhood—was not only revealed, but realised in Jesus. He not only taught the Fatherhood, but He lived it in His perfect personality as Son in knowledge, trust, surrender and fellowship. The revelation of the Fatherhood cannot be dissevered from the realisation of the Sonship, and the Sonship cannot be thought less divine than the Fatherhood. Those who take the name Father from the lips of Jesus, and fail to own the Sonship in His life, sever what in history was joined together. In the early Christian experience men rose to the Fatherhood by the true and living way of the Sonship. The certainty of the divine revelation in Christ is by His own claim bound up with the reality of His divinity. In what has been urged in the two previous sections the possibility of the divinity of Christ has been indicated, and the necessity of that divinity suggested.

(i) If God be personal as man is, if God be perfect and man imperfect but progressive personality, if God be as love self-communicative, and man be receptive of such communication, it is not incredible nor unintelligible that there should be constituted a divine-human personality in which God and man meet and are one. The older Christology assumed not only the difference, but even the opposition of the divine and the human natures, and then put them side by side in the abstract unity of the person of Christ, so conceived as to offer no explanation of even the possibility of two so diverse natures combining. Hence this Christology has always wavered between the absorption of the human in the divine nature to secure the unity of the person, or the reduction of the personal unity

to an abstract term in order to maintain the distinction of the two natures. But if we think of both God and man as personal, and conceive personality in both as *dynamic*, not *static*, as capable in God of self-limitation, and in man of self-development; if we think of both, because of their affinity, as mutually attractive, a downward movement of God in grace and an upward movement of man in faith, then the divine-human personality of Jesus becomes not only a possibility, but almost a necessity of our thought. A progressive incarnation through divine communicativeness and human receptivity in the personal development of the historical Jesus the Christ is credible and intelligible.[1]

(ii) There is a speculation in which many Christian thinkers have indulged, and which may be mentioned here with cordial appreciation—*i.e.* that, even had there been no sin in the world, and no necessity for redemption, yet the creation and the revelation of God through it would not have been completed without an Incarnation; and truly what consummation of the Universe more rational can be conceived, or what completion of God's purpose more worthy of His character as love can be believed, than that God should crown all His gifts in the gift of Himself under the conditions of His highest creature—man![2] But surely the fact of sin and the need of redemption offer even a more convincing argument for the belief in the Divine Incarnation! How could we conceive in a more adequate form God's acceptance of His responsibility as Creator, and still more as Father, for the freedom in which He created men that they might become His children, and for the consequences which that freedom abused by man involved, than that He should Himself participate in the sorrow and suffering which sin involved? God's sacrifice in Christ is surely the convincing answer to the challenge of His goodness which is offered by physical and moral

[1] See the fuller development of this conception in the writer's *Studies in the Inner Life of Jesus: Constructive Conclusion*, and *The Christian Certainty amid the Modern Perplexity*, chap. xii.; also compare Forsyth's *The Person and Place of Jesus Christ*, x., xi., xii.

[2] See Westcott's *The Epistles of St. John*, pp. 285-328.

evil. What solution of the problem could we think of more satisfying than that God should in Christ meet and overcome the world's sin and consequent misery in the personal experience of the sacrifice, which is the channel of salvation for man? If no fitter close to the world's evolution than God's adequate personal self-revelation can be conceived, no worthier solution of the problem of evil in that world than God's deliverance of man from evil, through His own endurance of it in self-sacrifice, can enter into the thoughts of man. The perfect revelation of God as Father, and the complete redemption of man as child of God, is surely end great enough to warrant faith in so great a means as the Divine Incarnation!

(2) Christian faith was impelled onward in the confession it made. Jesus was the Christ, then the Lord, and lastly the Word or the Son. Since the historical personality Jesus, as regards the Divine Sonship incarnate in Him, had to find a place within the being of God, the conception of the divine nature was transformed. To that change of thought another factor in Christian experience also contributed; at Pentecost the Christian Church became conscious of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ. The 'holy enthusiasm' and the 'holy energy' that possessed believers, was felt to be the life of God Himself in man. Jesus revealed the Father as Son, and through faith in the grace of the Son, revealing the love of the Father, the Christian Church experienced the *Koinonia*, the fellowship, the common life of the Spirit of God. Whether the apostolic commission in Matthew xxviii. 18-20 be an authentic saying of Jesus, or expresses at so early a date as the publication of the Gospel the consciousness of the Christian Church, it witnesses how soon the trinitarian conception of God emerged. A still earlier and even more suggestive witness is the apostolic benediction in 2 Corinthians xiii. 14, which appears to the writer the best statement of the doctrine of the Godhead, as it is not speculative, but experimental; deals not with abstract

definitions, but concrete functions. Thought may compel us to infer the *essential* Trinity, but we must start from and keep close to the *economic* Trinity in Christian experience.

(i) In speculative constructions of the doctrine the necessity of the Fatherhood and the Sonship, the subject and the object, the loving and the loved, have been demonstrated, but the proof of the need of the third person in the Godhead has usually halted. In the history of the development of the doctrine of the Godhead the confession of belief in the Holy Spirit was formal, and it was only the heresy of Macedonius which compelled the Church to define that belief, and in that definition the intellectual interest of symmetry rather than any vital necessity of piety was gratified. The explanation seems to be this, that to the objective revelation of the Father and the objective redemption by the Son, there did not correspond an adequate subjective response in personal piety. To apprehend and to appreciate the doctrine of the Holy Spirit there is needed an intense vitality and an abounding vigour of the inner life; doctrine and ritual must be supplemented by piety. Soon after the Apostolic Age the holy enthusiasm and the holy energy of the primitive community was suppressed; an ebb followed the flood tide of spirituality. The inner life must be so rich and strong as to be felt as the very life of God in the soul, and then the belief in the Spirit of God as the presence and power of God in the spiritual activities of man becomes a necessity for thought.

(ii) When we study the New Testament we do find some indistinctness in the language about the living Christ and the Holy Spirit. It sometimes appears as though Christ and the Spirit were identified. The Spirit is not only the Spirit of God, but also the Spirit of Christ, and in 2 Corinthians iii. 17 Paul makes the statement 'the Lord is the Spirit.' In view, however, of the distinction he does clearly make elsewhere between the Lord and the Spirit, we must regard the statement as a condensed

declaration of the dependence of the experience of the Spirit's transforming power on the believer's communion with the Living Lord. It is where there is faith in Christ that the Spirit dwells and works. What distinction can we make? The Son is God objectively revealed in the historical personality of Jesus, and the communion with the living Christ is a distinctly personal communion; but the Spirit is God subjectively realised in the illumination, aspiration, and activity of the human personality. In Christian experience the fellowship with the living Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit of God will blend together; and it is only in reflection on that experience that we can make such a distinction. As Christian faith was compelled to confess God incarnate in Jesus Christ, so was it compelled to confess God within the believer's own experience as the Spirit of God. For our present purpose it is not necessary to dwell on the distinction presented in the New Testament between the abnormal gifts of the Spirit as in the speaking with tongues, and the normal working of the Spirit in sanctification, for in both there is this intimate participation of God in the inner life of man, which we have found to be the distinctive characteristic of the Spirit's function.

(3) The doctrine of the Trinity is rooted in Christian experience, and can be apprehended only where that experience is appreciated. Hence speculative constructions apart from religious interests are always unsatisfactory. An attempt may be made to construe the doctrine in the religious interests.

(i) It has already been shown that man must think God as both transcendent and yet immanent, as above and beyond, and yet in and through nature and history. A transcendence that is not deistically conceived must not be separated from an immanence of God; and an immanence that is not pantheistically represented must be related to a transcendence. This difference-in-unity there must be. Again, as man distinguishes himself from the world, the divine immanence to be complete must

for him be both objective and subjective, revealed in the world and realised in himself. We have surely then these moments in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The transcendent God, yet related to the immanent in indissoluble unity, is the Father; the objectively immanent God is the Logos, or Word of God, God revealing Himself in nature and history, but disclosing the inmost secret of the life of God as holy love in the Incarnate Son; the subjectively immanent God is the Spirit of God, imparting the life of God as holy love in the enlightening, cleansing, and renewing of the soul of man, and revealing that life again objectively in the community of believers. But it is the one God who is as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit revealed and realised; and the difference must be so conceived in unity as to preserve and confirm monotheism.

(ii) But if it be objected that what has been set forth is only an economic and not an essential trinity, two considerations may be offered in reply. *First of all*, the distinction between economic and essential trinity, convenient as it is, where what God is in Himself and what God reveals Himself as being are conceived as possibly different, disappears as soon as we recognise that when we speak of revelation we do not mean concealment; that it is to think of God as less than Infinite and Absolute Truth if we conceive Him as revealing anything but the reality of Himself. All certainty and confidence would be lost in the religious life if God in Himself can be thought as other than He makes Himself known to be in His revelation. If He is revealed temporally as Father, Son, and Spirit, then He is eternally Father, Son, and Spirit.

(iii) But as has been already suggested, we cannot conceive God as personal without conceiving Him as difference in unity. We cannot think of Him as conscious without the distinction of subject and object, as truth without the knowing and the known, as holiness without the purpose and the realisation, as love without the loving and the loved. But the difference must also be ever the

expression and realisation of unity. The Hegelian thesis, antithesis, and synthesis does represent the movement of thought, life, love; and, however imperfectly, suggests to us the Father, Son, and Spirit in the one God. The writer does not pretend that here we can do more than 'speak only that we may not keep silence,' but at least a trinitarian conception seems more rational than a unitarian.

(4) The formula for the doctrine of the Trinity in the ecumenical creeds is three persons in one substance, and for the doctrine of Christ two natures (or substances) in one person.

(i) The terminology here is ambiguous, because substance in the Godhead and in Christ cannot mean exactly the same, nor can person. If we use substance in Christ as we do in the Godhead, we sacrifice the unity of His person; and if we use person in the Godhead in the same sense as in Christ, we sacrifice the unity of the substance. Again, substance is too physical a conception, and does not suggest the mental, moral, and spiritual reality with which we are concerned in both doctrines. Further, 'person' did not, when the creeds were formed, mean what it now means, a separate individual. The formulæ now tend to encourage a tritheism that represents Father, Son, and Spirit as partners in a firm, or members of a family, and a dualism regarding the person of Christ which represents Him as part God and part man, as now thinking and acting as God, and now feeling and wishing as man.

(ii) The starting-point for any statement of the doctrine to-day must be the personal unity of the Godhead and the personal unity of Christ. Not substance but personality is the adequate category for the Godhead; and the 'person' of Christ must be conceived, not as an abstract bond of union between two separate concrete substances, but concretely in the full sense we assign to personality, as one divine-human personality. Even although properly the word personality should connote the qualities that belong to person, and person the reality so denoted;

owing to the use of the word 'person' for Father, Son, and Spirit in the Godhead, and the vague sense of the same term as used of Christ, it might be an advantage if we could use the term 'personality' for the unity of the Godhead and the unity of Christ, as thus we might emphasise the fact that in each case we mean all the qualities, the full reality that the term connotes.

(iii) If, as has been insisted, God and man are personal, and there is such affinity and such attraction of God and man that the unity of God and man in the divine human personality of Christ is conceivable, then the sooner we get rid of the duality of the two substances in His person from our thought, the better will it be for us in apprehending His significance, and appreciating His value. We may speak of two natures, as long as we understand thereby the personal communicativeness of God and the personal receptivity of man, a distinction that does not hinder but secures the personal unity.

(iv) The writer must confess that his great difficulty in stating the doctrine of the Trinity has arisen from the use of the word 'person' to express the difference of Father, Son, and Spirit, as it suggests separate individuals, and so makes God appear a generic and not a personal unity. He has failed, however, to find any term that would appear more suitable. 'Mode,' 'Principle,' 'Subsistence,' are too abstract and impersonal terms, and suggest too little distinction, just as 'person' in the current use of the term suggests too much. Probably we must continue using the term 'person,' but guard ourselves in our thought and speech against the identifying of person and individual, and so tending to tritheism.

(v) In recent reflection on the subject the difficulty has been relieved in some degree by the modern conception of personality as by its very nature social, or of society as organic, for these are correlative conceptions. The New Testament phrase, the *Koinonia* of the Holy Spirit, means not only the common life of God and the individual believer in the Spirit of God, but also, and even more, the common

life of all believers in that Spirit. Paul's conception of the Christian society in 1 Corinthians xii. is organic, a body of which all believers are members, and of which the common life is love. Thus he anticipates the modern conception of society, which is proving so fruitful as a motive of social reform. Would not a *society perfectly organic* be one and the same as a *perfect social personality*? A corporate consciousness need not absorb, but may be the completion of individual consciousnesses. With all diffidence the writer would suggest that it is in this direction that we may look for the solution of our problem. If we strip the term 'person' of all suggestion of isolating individuality, and think of each as social personality, may not the perfect organic society of Father, Son, and Spirit be thought as the perfect social personality of the one God?

(vi) To the writer the difficulty seems more practical than theoretical. Our morality and our religion are still so individualistic, that an organic society and a social personality seem to us still meaningless and worthless abstractions. But were we to live in the *Koinonia* of the Spirit within the Christian community, realising fully the spiritual unity of all believers; were we, having been thus disciplined and developed in social personality within the organic society of the Church, to extend the scope of our *Koinonia* to the world around so that all mankind might be brought into the Christian society, we should be better fitted to conceive, because worthier of the revelation of the one God as Father, Son, and Spirit.

(vii) The revelation of the Father has been given in the teaching and life of Jesus; the revelation of the Son has also come to us in the personal work of Christ; the revelation of the Spirit is still being made in individual experience and the Christian community, and that revelation is not yet complete, for even Christian saints and seers have been far from proving perfect organs of the divine as Christ Himself was. When that revelation is perfected in a Christian Church in which each lives in

all, and all in each; when the body of Christ is in the Spirit one as Father and Son are one, then dare we not believe the unity of Father, Son, and Spirit will be realised as we fail to do now, and then God as one in Father, Son, and Spirit will be all in all, 'the far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves?'

CHAPTER VII

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF MAN

I

(1) IN the Christian view, in which God and man are related as Father and child, as we think of God we must think of man; accordingly in dealing with the personality of God we have anticipated in some measure the contents of this chapter; but the conception of personality, as applied to man, may be more fully developed than has hitherto been necessary. What are the marks of personality?

(i) The first mark is *unity*; while man thinks, feels, wills, it is as one subject; however manifold the contents of man's consciousness, the consciousness of the one self thinking, feeling, willing in all, makes the manifold one. It seems one of the mare's nests of modern physiological psychology to take the pathological cases of divided personality as showing that personality is a multiplicity and not a unity; surely it is in mental health and not disease that we learn what mind is. Again the psychology that treats thought, feeling, and will as separate faculties, and then finds some difficulty in relating them, is a mental abstraction that has no relation to concrete reality. Still more, the psychology that takes thoughts, feelings, and volitions as the elements of consciousness, and then tries cunningly to compound them into self-consciousness, has lost its object in its method. The constitution of mind is not *atomic*, but *organic*. A mental fact has meaning and worth only as the function of the self. It is necessary to insist on the unity of personality, not only against erroneous tendencies in psychology, but still more against

false phraseology in religion. Head and Heart, Reason and Conscience, Soul and Spirit have been opposed to one another with disastrous results. Personality is liable to one-sided development, intellectual, emotional, or volitional, and it may be necessary sometimes to condemn such one-sidedness, but this is not effectively done by another one-sidedness. In religion the whole personality must be exercised and realised.

(ii) A second mark of personality is *identity*; while we are not continuously conscious, yet there is a continuity in our personal life. The self of to-day remembers the self of yesterday, and expects the self of to-morrow as one and the same. Without such identity memory, character, progress would be impossible. A man is ashamed of, and blames himself for, the sins of his youth; a man fears and shrinks from the judgment on his sins that the future may hold. So goodness binds past, present, and future in gladness and hope. This identity must be insisted on against an error that is sometimes met with in extreme evangelical circles. The language of the New Testament about the new birth (John iii. 3-8), the new creation, the old things that have passed away, and the things that have all become new (2 Cor. v. 17) is taken with prosaic literalness, as affirming a personal discontinuity between the saved and the unsaved man. The late Henry Drummond in his chapter on 'Biogenesis,' in his book *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, gave a quasi-scientific sanction to this error, in which assuredly dogmatism rides rough-shod over reality. However great the difference grace makes, it does not destroy the personal identity; and the 'new' man soon discovers how closely he is still bound to the 'old,' when the old temptations again are clamorous, and the old habits once more assert themselves.

(iii) This identity is not, however, *static*, but *dynamic*; there is continuity, but not fixity; in *development* continuity is maintained amid change. From childhood there is progress through boyhood or girlhood and adolescence

to maturity; and then there is decay, physical, but not necessarily mental, moral, or spiritual, unless when disease affects the mind, until death, which for the Christian, however, means the beginning of further progress. The religious life is subject to development also, and we are only now in religious education giving adequate attention to the stages of that development. Here again we may touch on a practical error which arises from the neglect of this fact of development. Through misunderstanding of the language of Scripture, and disregard of the special conditions of the Christian Church in the Apostolic Age, some preachers and teachers insist on conversion, such as it is in adult experience, as a necessary condition of the beginning of the Christian life, and in religious education attempts were sometimes made to force such an adult experience on little children; there is no reason why, if Christian influences are brought to bear on childhood from the beginning, there may not be a growth in grace corresponding to, though of course not identical with, the natural development. In adolescence it is found that there is exceptional responsiveness to religious influence; and, where there has already been such growth in grace, there is sometimes seen a definite decision for the Christian life, confirming and not contradicting the earlier development; but, where such growth in grace has been absent, there is often met with what may be truly called conversion, a moral and spiritual change that gives a new direction to the subsequent development.[1] Apart from this particular instance, the importance of this fact of development for religion cannot be overestimated; for while it holds out ever the hope of change, it forbids the expectation that that change will be or must be sudden in most cases; and yet it does not preclude the possibility of even sudden change. As in nature evolution has not been uniform, but there have been fresh stages which cannot be regarded as merely the result of the previous stages, so in religious development the unexpected, and largely inexplicable,

[1] See Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion.*

cannot be excluded. On the one hand, as human personality is conceived in the Christian view, there is in it unexhausted possibility, moral and spiritual, which may be actualised far beyond what the previous development would lead us to expect, and enable us to explain; and on the other, human personality is in contact with divine personality, and so may receive therefrom a stimulus to so great and swift a progress that it can without exaggeration be described as creative. But whether swift or slow, development is a necessary feature of personality in man.

(iv) This development is both organic and conscious. Even in the organic there is discernible a teleology, a selection, combination, and direction of means towards an end.[1] How far teleology implies consciousness, however rudimentary, we need not inquire, as our immediate concern is conscious development. This conscious development is conditioned by the organic; for mental, moral, and even religious growth is related to physical. Materialism treats mind as the product of brain; but into this controversy we need not now enter. Two statements of authority will serve as a reason for our not taking the materialistic contention into further account. Sir Oliver Lodge suggests that life transcends and utilises physical forces; and the late Professor James insists that brain is not the productive cause of thought, but only its permissive or transmissive organ.[2] The theory with which most psychologists conduct their inquiries is that of 'pyscho-physical parallelism,' the recognition of a correspondence between brain processes and mental without asserting a causal relation; but the teleology in the processes of life, as well as perception through sensation and movement by volition, suggest a closer connection than the term parallelism indicates. Consciousness is not constant, and yet there is continuity of mental life. We must accordingly

[1] See Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism* for a full discussion of this subject, especially Lec. xix.

[2] Lodge's *Life and Matter*, p. 198; James's *Human Immortality*, p. 32.

recognise what has been more recently called *subliminal consciousness*, but Sir William Hamilton spoke of as *mental latency*.[1] Memory retains the impressions of the past, and we are not conscious of them, but can recall them into consciousness. We may have all the data for the solution of some problem present in our consciousness, but we cannot combine them for the desired result. We turn away our attention, or even we 'sleep on it,' and, as in a flash of insight, the solution is discovered. Behind what seem to us sudden inspirations there lies probably considerable mental activity of which we are not aware. There may come into our consciousness impressions of the past of which we were not conscious at the time. Attempts have been made to find the locus of religion, inspiration, and even of incarnation [2] within the *subliminal consciousness*; and to represent man as through it related to a wider environment than consciousness can reach. But we must be careful not to confuse man's spiritual and his organic environment; his relations to God are not to be embraced in the same term as his dependence on his body. If this mental latency be due to man's personality being now dependent in its activities on a physical organism, it is not here that his communion with God is to be placed. We should rather distinguish a *supraliminal* consciousness from this *subliminal*. It is because man is incarnate personality, conditioned and limited by its organism, that the spiritual environment is not consciously realised at all times, that his relation to God reveals itself in momentary intuitions and occasional inspirations, and not in an unclouded vision and an uninterrupted consciousness. That man is related to such spiritual environment, larger and richer than can now fully enter his consciousness, must from the Christian standpoint be maintained. But it is not by less consciousness, but by more, that his contact with that environment will become

[1] *Lectures on Metaphysics*, xviii.

[2] See Sanday's *Christologies Ancient and Modern*, vi. and vii.; James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 511-15.

closer. God enters into man's thought not through the cellar of the subliminal, but through the upper chamber of aspiration and endeavour. This we shall see still more clearly if we now concentrate our attention on man's conscious development.[1]

(v) Conscious development implies knowledge of an end, and choice of means to reach that end. The first we may call man's *ideality*, the second is his *liberty*. In his thought man is conscious of the end of truth, in his feeling of the end of happiness, or, to distinguish this ideal from sensuous enjoyment, blessedness, in his willing the end of holiness; in the expression of his whole personality outward of the end of love. Man is rational, moral, social. As his environment is not only human but divine, he is also *religious*, as he seeks to enter into relation with God as well as his fellow-men; and in that relation to God as the reality of all his ideals he has the assurance of their realisation.[2] Eucken has distinguished between universal and characteristic religion. To realise his ideals man seeks relation to God the reality of them; this is universal religion; but above and beyond this he has a personal need of God, which only a personal communion with God can meet; this is characteristic religion.[3] Christianity recognises all these ideals as belonging properly to human personality as the end of its development, and for it characteristic religion is the relation of God as Father to man as child in Christ.

(2) The question of man's liberty is of such importance for the Christian view that it demands a fuller treatment than any of the characteristics of human personality so far noted. This closer consideration is also required by the insistent challenge of man's claim of freedom.

(i) About the testimony of consciousness itself there can be no doubt. Man is conscious of choosing between what presents itself to him as right, and what he judges

[1] See *The Christian Certainty*, p. 446 ff.
[2] See Inge, *Faith and its Psychology*, especially chap. xiii.
[3] See *Der Wahrheitsgehalt der Religion*.

wrong; if he chooses wrong he blames himself, feels ashamed of himself, and, if he is religious as well as moral, looks for God's judgment, and further, if he believes the Christian Gospel, seeks God's forgiveness. Remorse and repentance are realities of human life. Not only does a man so judge himself; but even although he cannot himself be conscious that others are choosing, yet he judges their actions as equally resulting from choice. Social censure, legal penalty, personal reputation, all assume that man's acts are his, and that he is responsible for them. This unequivocal testimony might in such a question be regarded as final; but it has been often challenged.

(ii) There is the old dispute between *determinism* and *indeterminism*, in which the question is wrongly stated on both sides. We cannot conceive action that is undetermined—that is, action without any motive or reason; and in so far as the defence of liberty was committed to such indeterminism it deserved to fail. The question is not: is action determined or undetermined? but how is action determined? Is it the whole personality, or some part of the personality by itself, that acts? The determinist position depends altogether on the false abstraction of faculties, or even thoughts, feelings, volitions from the self, to which reference has already been made. Actions were said to be determined by the strongest motive. A number of competing desires were supposed to be in conflict, and the strongest of these was assumed at last to carry the day, and so determine the will to the action. There was besides this false abstraction of the self that desires and wills from its desires and volitions, a reasoning in a circle; the motive was judged the strongest, because it determined the will, and it determined the will because it was the strongest. A more accurate psychology disposes of all this sophistry. Desires are the self desiring, and the range and the quality of the desires depend on the character of the self. It is not correct to speak of competing motives, for till the choice is made, the desires cannot be said to move the will. The motive is the

desire to which effect is given in the choice. Which desire becomes the motive does not depend on the relative strength of the desires; but once more the character of the self determines to which desire effect will be given. We may say, if we will, that the will gives effect to the desire that is the motive; but here again we run the risk of false abstraction. As the desire is the self desiring, and the motive the self moved to choice, so the will is the self willing. In the whole process we are concerned only with the self.

(iii) It may be objected, however, that in this argument we are making a mysterious self the refuge of our ignorance. What determines this self so to desire, choose, act? Self-realisation is the end of self; but that self-realisation may be sought in the gratification of appetites, ambition, etc., on the one hand, or the pursuit of the ideals on the other hand. The self in choosing determines whether its self-realisation in the lower or the higher sense will be effected by the gratification of this desire or that; and the desire with which it identifies its good becomes the motive of its action. But can we arrest our analysis even here? What determines the self to identify itself either with the lower impulse or the higher aspiration? Blatchford, for instance, would promptly reply, the heredity and the environment; for man is but a puppet moved by his parentage or his circumstances. It is not at all necessary to deny the influence of both these factors in human development. Children do resemble their parents, not only physically, but also morally and mentally; this we must admit, whether with Spencer we affirm or with Weismann we deny the transmission of acquired characteristics. But two considerations may make us pause before we ascribe moral resemblance to physical heredity. *Firstly*, unless organism determines personality to a greater extent than appears probable, we cannot even conceive the vital mechanism by which moral characteristics could be transmitted from parent to offspring. The Mendelian theory is based on physical characteristics, such

as size, colour, etc., and it is a rash and bold assumption that vices and virtues can be accounted for similarly. *Secondly*, the environment affects the development of the child most potently in the earliest years, and the moral resemblances may be due to parental influence after birth, rather than to heredity before. It has been proved again and again that, if the child of evil parents be removed in infancy or early childhood to a good moral environment, there is no moral resemblance to them. Heredity cannot be proved an inescapable moral fate. Just as the great majority of children are born physically healthy, and infantile mortality is due to evil conditions, so we may maintain that as regards moral heredity children are born without any moral determination for good or evil. Of the moral potency of the environment, especially in the earliest years, we cannot speak too strongly. But work such as that of Dr. Barnardo or of the Salvation Army does show that there may be moral recovery even when an evil moral development has begun, if sufficiently potent moral influences are brought to bear. Circumstances are not omnipotent over the human soul; and there are instances enough of triumph over environment to contradict the assertion that the self is and must be what the surroundings make it.

(iv) The older Christian theology maintained a doctrine of *original sin* and *total depravity* which committed it to a denial of man's liberty. Man was free only to do evil, and only when renewed by grace did he become capable of goodness. This fact was explained in three ways, according to the view of the soul maintained. *Traducianism*, held by Tertullian, was undoubtedly the simplest and most consistent theory. It affirmed that the soul as well as the body was transmitted from parent to child. The *theory of pre-existence* did not account for the origin of sin by heredity, but by a moral lapse of the individual in a previous state of existence. This view of Origen Julius Müller has attempted to revive in modern times. *Creationism*, the view held by Anselm and the Schoolmen, assumes

the divine creation of each individual soul; and involves the difficulty that original sin can be explained only as either the result of the contact of the pure soul with the body defiled by heredity, or the penalty inflicted by God on each soul as the result of Adam's transgression. The exaggerated views of total depravity which we meet with in some Christian writings are due to the mistake of taking the Scripture accounts of the moral corruption of the pagan world as descriptive of man's natural moral condition. If we ascribe to children the lust and cruelty and other abominations of a decadent civilisation, we must certainly assign to them original sin in a very large measure. But if, on the contrary, we take Jesus' estimate of childhood,[1] and if, instead of allowing theory to override fact, we observe children carefully, and make due allowance for the immediate influence of the evil in their environment, we shall probably reach the conclusion that they are not born with any manifest tendency to evil rather than good. And as has just been said above, even the evil that shows itself in early years we may ascribe to environment rather than to heredity. To this question we must return, but at this stage of our argument it was necessary to make clear that Christian theology need not regard itself committed to any view that substitutes for liberty determination of the personality by heredity or environment.

(v) But if it be admitted that heredity and environment do not determine personality, it may be further urged that a man's present is bound by his past; he acts and is expected to act according to his character. Repeated action becomes habit, and habits combine to fix character. It is true that in our moral judgments of men we do expect them to act according to character. If we hear of a moral offence which has been committed by a good man, we are at first incredulous, and say it is morally impossible; and we accept the fact only when the evidence leaves us no escape. We are surprised at a worthy deed done by a

[1] Matthew xviii. 3, 4; xix. 14.

man whose course of life has been bad. There is consistency and uniformity to a high degree in human conduct; and we act, and must act, on such general judgments of our fellow-men. From the Christian point of view we do not assert an unconditional liberty for any man. A man is limiting his moral possibility by the character he is forming. But the Christian Gospel declares the possibility of repentance and conversion, and summons man to turn from the evil past to a good future. Two reasons justify that summons. *In the first place*, a man's character, as it is known to others, or even as it is known to himself, is not his whole self; personality as such is a possibility of development which cannot be regarded as exhausted at any stage. One of the merits assigned to Charles Dickens, for instance, is that he makes us see some good even in the worst characters. There are dissatisfactions with the evil the soul accepts, and aspirations for the good it refuses, that may with the proper adequate stimulus become dominant motives. It is the mechanical view applied in a sphere where it is literally an impertinence, that leads us to think of the personality as a fixed sum of past experiences. Personal development is *creative evolution*, the actualisation of possibility till then unrecognised even in self-consciousness. A man does not know to what badness he may fall, or to what goodness he may rise; still less can his fellows tell him. As God is the reality of man's ideals, we may say that in the measure in which a man is seeking to realise these ideals especially in personal relation to God, his personality ceases to be measurable and calculable, and gains a relative infinitude. *Secondly*, in religion man is in contact with and under the influence of his divine environment, the God in whom he lives, and moves, and has his being; and here the evil in the man finds an *expulsive*, and the good an *impulsive* force which cannot be estimated. Even if heredity, environment, and character combine to hold a man in moral bondage, yet if he turn from sin to God, if he, however faint his aspiration or feeble his choice, identify

himself for his good not with his clamorous appetites, but with the call of God to repentance and faith, the grace of God will rescue him from that bondage, and restore to him his liberty to trust, love, and serve God freely.

(3) There is another characteristic of human personality which must here be mentioned, although the full treatment must be reserved for the last chapter. If, on the one hand, the relation of the organism to the personality be not *productive* but *transmissive*, if life transcends body; and if, on the other hand, man is engaged in a realisation of ideals of absolute value which is never in this present life completed, we are warranted in concluding that, on the one hand, the dissolution of the organism does not necessitate the destruction of the personality, and on the other hand, the value of the ideals being realised guarantees that the personal development will not be arrested by death, but will be continued and completed in a future life. This, in brief, is the argument for immortality in its negative and positive aspect, which must afterwards be developed in detail; but which is here given to show that the conception of personality that has been sketched leads inevitably to this hope. The Christian faith does not contradict, but confirms the hope; and affords convincing reasons for it in the Resurrection of Christ Himself, and the eternal life of believers in Him, which lift it far above a conjecture into a certainty. In this conception of personality Christian faith can join hands with philosophical idealism, although it does not assert liberty unconditionally, recognises man's sinfulness more adequately, maintains the possibility of conversion still more confidently, and gives firmer assurance to the hope of immortality.

II

(1) In dealing with the Christian view of man it is necessary to emphasise several features of human personality more fully than a philosophical treatment would demand.

(i) First of all, the *reality of man's sinfulness* must be asserted, for the Christian salvation is supremely deliverance from sin unto God. And this sinfulness must be defined religiously and not morally only. The injury man does to himself in the wrong choice may be spoken of as *vice*; the wrong he inflicts on others as *crime*; but sin is a term which gets its distinctive meaning from man's relation to God as moral perfection, holy love. It is not only *disobedience* of the law of God, but it is *distrust* of His love. A man may be morally respectable, and yet religiously sinful. Blameless of vice, uncharged with crime, he is nevertheless guilty of sin if he lives as though there were no God; for we are made for God's companionship, and we fall short of the end of our being if we do not glorify Him. It is necessary to insist on this to-day, as there is a widespread tendency to ignore the claim of religion on the soul. Ethical societies are carrying on a propaganda in favour of morality without the religious sanctions, and even men themselves religious think that, so long as a man is moral, it does not matter whether he recognises the existence, submits to the authority, and accepts the grace of God. The elder brother in the parable of Jesus,[1] because his heart was estranged from his father, was sinful even as the prodigal; and so from the Christian standpoint not to know, trust, love, and obey God in the filial relation is to sin.

(ii) While the Christian ideal quickens conscience, so that the inward motive no less than the outward act is judged; and the Christian Gospel even in offering forgiveness and holiness stimulates penitence and humility, so that the reality of sin is more keenly felt, and more deeply mourned by each believer, Christian theology in the past has been guilty, as has already been indicated, of unreality in much of its talk about total depravity. Man is never altogether evil, and if he were, there could be no hope of his recovery. It is with the good in each man, memories of saintly parents, regrets

[1] Luke xv. 11-32.

for lost innocence, shame at present degradation, desire for amendment, that the Gospel finds its points of contact.

> 'Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,
> Feelings lie buried that grace may restore.'

Conversion is not literally creative, for the personality preserves its identity; but the good, however held down in the past life, gains the mastery, and the evil, though kept in check in the new life, is not at once extinguished. Sincere and severe as a man's judgment of himself should be, yet Christian theology does not glorify God by libelling man. However great the moral and religious change of conversion, it does not begin an entirely new personal development, but is a first stage in one personal development. Just as after conversion no man is absolutely good, so before conversion no man was absolutely bad. The quickened conscience of the converted man will see more evil in the previous life than was seen before; but the fact that he at all responded to God's grace shows that his life was not only evil, without any good at all.

(iii) The emphasis that the Christian Gospel puts on the reality of sin, and the necessity of conversion from sin to God, does not depend on any particular theory of the origin of sin. Opponents of the evangelical theology, and some of its unwise defenders, make the doctrines of grace rest on the foundation of the doctrine of the Fall. In view of assured results of modern scholarship it is impossible to maintain as literal history the narratives in Genesis i.-iii. We now know that these stories are borrowed from Babylonian mythology, although stripped of polytheism, and clothed with monotheism in the telling. Even if we could take them literally, does the cause—the eating of an apple—seem adequate to the effect—the sinfulness of the human race? It is vain labour to interpret the narratives allegorically, and to assume some definite event in the evolution of the race, when the right course was abandoned for the wrong. Even assuming, as we may,

the unity of the human race, its common descent, Christian theology is more prudent in not committing itself to any such conjecture. The Old Testament affirms man's sinfulness, but does not base its affirmations on the story of the Fall. It is only in some of the later Jewish writings that the story is mentioned. Jesus in His teaching speaks of man as diseased, and so needing Him as the physician (Mark ii. 17), and as lost, and so needing to be sought and saved by Him (Luke xix. 10). That Paul believed the story of the Fall, and used it in explanation of the universality of sin and death, cannot be questioned; but still it is to be observed that in his argument in Romans i.-iii. he reaches his conclusion that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God' as an induction from the moral condition of Jew and Gentile alike, not as a deduction from the story of the Fall. When he does introduce that narrative in the fifth chapter, it is not to prove man's universal sinfulness, but to show how much more efficacious Christ's grace unto life must be than even Adam's transgression unto death has been. The reality and the universality of sin is a fact of experience, and is unaffected by any view held of the beginning of sin.

(4) Is there any explanation of that universality?

(i) We are learning to-day how potent is the moral environment on the moral development, and that the moral environment is constituted by what is described as *social heredity*, not the physical connection of parent and child, but the transmission from generation to generation in each society of customs, standards, institutions. It is probable that to a very great extent, greater than has hitherto been recognised by Christian theology, the child is morally made or marred by this environment or social heredity. There is, to use Ritschl's phrase, *a kingdom of evil*,[1] of which the child may very soon become a subject. That environment is more potent than heredity is a hopeful fact for human progress, as we can improve the environment more effectively than the heredity; but it is a fact

[1] See *The Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 303-4.

that the orthodox Christian theology has not adequately taken into account, although there are signs of a welcome change.

(ii) But we have not escaped heredity in our explanation, even if we have widened its scope from the parents of whom, to the society in which, the child is born. It may be asked what began the kingdom of evil? To answer the question, two lines of inquiry have been followed. It is said that the savage represents the primitive man, and that the primitive man was slowly evolving out of the merely animal to the human stage. The vices of the savage are but the survival in man of animal appetites or impulses to self-satisfaction or self-defence; natural and legitimate in the animal, these survivals become immora and illegitimate only when a stage of social development has been reached when regard for others should put a check on sensuality or cruelty. As the rudimentary conscience—which is, to begin with, the sense of tribal relations, and such regard for others as these may impose —develops, the animal appetites or impulses that come into conflict with it come to be regarded as sinful. It is an assumption, however, that the savage represents primitive man; in evolution stagnation and decadence are possible as well as progress; and it is probable that the sensuality and cruelty of the savage are greater than of the primitive man, for from the primitive man have developed the civilised as well as the savage races, and in the primitive man must have been the possibilities of both vice and virtue. Again, it is an assumption that humanity must have passed through an animal stage morally; man's physical descent from lower animal forms may be admitted; and yet until more convincing evidence is offered we may hesitate about admitting a necessary moral affinity. Mentally, morally, and religiously man has realised possibilities so far removed from any of his animal kinsmen—and as creatures of the same God we need not shrink from calling them this—that it is incredible that his beginnings must have been exactly as the condition in

which without any progress they have continued unto this day. The fixity of animal instinct and the progress of human intelligence present too wide a contrast to warrant the easy assumption that primitive man must have been but an animal. If he was, how did he not remain as all his kinsfolk have? We need not commit ourselves to the absurdity of clothing primitive man with all the excellences to which humanity may aspire, as Christian theology once did; but we may at least suspend our judgment when we are asked to conceive him as a lustful and angry brute. Our inquiries cannot penetrate to the beginning.[1]

(iii) The child is held to reproduce in his development the evolution of the race; and by observation of the child it is held by some we can tell how sin originates in the individual, and so infer its origin in the race. In following this method, however, two assumptions are made. *First of all*, it is assumed that the environment is not affecting the child's moral development; the factor of *social heredity* is ignored. *Secondly*, in that development animal appetites and impulses are assumed to be normal; but just here, where body and mind must closely touch, we cannot altogether exclude the possibility of an intensification of these appetites by physical heredity from parents that have indulged these appetites. Mr. Tennant has given a full account of the child's development as he conceives it; natural appetites of self-gratification and natural impulses of self-defence, which at the earliest stage are altogether non-moral, are developed before affection, conscience, and will. When the actual moral development begins these appetites and impulses are already in possession, and maintain themselves against the affection for the parents, and the authority of the parents, the form in which moral law first reaches the life of the child; and so when the will comes to be exercised, the moral personality has already acquired a certain bias. The moral race in each individual begins with this handi-

[1] See Fairbairn's *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, Book I. chap. ii.

cap; and thus the universality of sin can be explained.[1] That there is some truth in this account need not be questioned; but we may doubt whether in itself it is an adequate explanation, and should not be supplemented by a recognition of both social and physical heredity as effective factors. The child does not in this respect completely recapitulate the race, and the origin of sin in the race remains unexplained.

(iv) It is not incumbent on Christian thought to commit itself to any theory, although it must utter its caveat to any theory that treats sin as an inevitable factor of human development, and so lessens the sense of sinfulness, and challenges the condemnation by conscience of sin as that which ought not to be, for which man must hold himself responsible, and on which rests God's judgment.[2]

(3) Whatever be the origin of sin, the Christian faith is concerned with sin, not in the child nor in the savage, but in the developed moral personality, where there is a distinct sense of right and wrong, and where there is liberty of choice, and responsibility for choice, conditioned but not destroyed by heredity, environment, character. As the Gospel is not an exacting law demanding man's unaided obedience, but an offer of a saving grace, which is to be desired in penitence and accepted in faith, however limited the liberty may be, enough remains to impose the

[1] See *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*, pp. 96-115, and *The Child and Religion*, pp. 154-84.

[2] In a recent book, Hall's *Evolution and the Fall*, the attempt is made to reconcile the scientific doctrine of evolution, as applied to man, and what the author regards as the Catholic doctrine of the Fall, by the assumption that 'man's primitive state was partly supernatural,' and that for him 'an original righteousness was made possible by grace.' It was this supernatural gift which was lost at the Fall, and thus the race was left to a natural development, such as science seems to require us to admit. While the writer himself does not feel it incumbent on him to try and prove the permanent validity of 'Catholic doctrine,' yet the development of the argument in this book has confirmed his conviction, as already stated, that man having developed a moral conscience and a religious consciousness, as no other animal has, having made so great progress both in goodness and godliness, need not—nay, even cannot—be regarded as, at the beginning of his history as man, but a little removed from the brute, as even the savage is not, but must be thought of as possessing, even at that first stage of development, the higher characteristics which afterwards so distinguish him from all other creatures.

responsibility for acceptance or rejection. Jesus was the friend, not only of social outcasts, but even of the morally depraved; and He offered His grace to those whom moral respectability regarded as helplessly and hopelessly lost, for He at least was confident that the lost could be found, and the dead could be made alive.[1] The Christian Gospel lays so great stress on man's sinfulness, not to degrade him, or to drive him to despair, but to hold out to him the certainty of a deliverance that will exalt him to the dignity and the privilege of a child of God, not only forgiven but called, and by grace enabled, to become perfect as the Heavenly Father is perfect. Opposing tendencies of thought that minimise man's need are in their seeming kindness really cruel; for the disclosure of the depths to which man has fallen is also the assurance of the heights to which he may be raised.

III

(1) Having considered the Christian conception of human personality, and the Christian estimate of the sin that has marred and hindered its development, we may now look briefly at the course of *the recovery of the soul by grace*. The first stage in that recovery is repentance. The Greek word in the New Testament, *metanoia*, means change of mind; and what that change involves is suggested by Jesus' description of the prodigal 'when he came to himself' (Luke xv. 17). In sin there has been a false estimate of values; the appetites and passions with which the personality has identified its own self-realisation have not satisfied, and cannot satisfy; the soul begins to be in want, and cannot find what it seeks. When the grace of God in Christ is presented, the personality discovers the reality, in which alone it can find fulfilment; its real self is the child of God, and as the possibility of becoming a child of God is apprehended and appreciated, there is the coming to the true self by the turning from the false.

[1] Luke xv. 32.

That there might be this repentance, there must have been some faith in God's grace; for the true self must be believed as possible before the false self is renounced. A self-knowledge apart from the hope of self-recovery, which only faith in God's grace can sustain, would lead to remorse and not repentance. We may contrast the fate of Judas when he discovered that he had betrayed the innocent blood (Matt. xxvii. 3, 5), and the change in Peter when his denial was brought home to him in the look that Jesus gave him (Luke xxii. 61). The possibility of such self-recovery has already been discussed. Various influences may lead the soul to come to itself. Browning makes the agonised look in Pompilia's face the means of Caponsacchi's return to his true manhood.[1] But no means has been found so generally effective as the presentation of the Cross, the divine sacrifice for human salvation. And whatever intellectual difficulties theologians may discover in the doctrine of the Atonement, the Cross has brought many to 'the broken and the contrite heart,' and to the forgiveness which is its healing.

(ii) Faith must accompany, and, as we have seen, is the cause of repentance. Faith as it is presented in the New Testament is not merely or mainly intellectual belief. There must be some apprehension by the mind of the truth as it is in Jesus, and some appreciation by the heart of the worth of His salvation; but the decisive act of faith is self-committal to His grace in confidence that He can and that He will save. There must be surrender as well as trust, obedience as well as acceptance. Belief in a plan of salvation or a theory of atonement does not save, but personal dependence on, confidence in, and submission to the living Saviour does. This faith may become, as it did in Paul's case, so close a communion that he could think of his experience as a being crucified and being raised again with Christ; but even if such depths

[1] 'That night and next day did the gaze endure,
Burn to my brain, as sunbeam thro' shut eyes,
And not once changed the beautiful sad strange smile.'
The Ring and the Book, ii. 180.

are not fathomed or such heights scaled, faith is a constant receptivity for the abounding communicativeness of the love of God in Christ's grace. Although a receptivity, that is a dependence on, confidence in, and submission to Christ, faith is not a passivity but an activity. To receive the truth and the grace of Jesus Christ requires a constant exercise of mind and heart and will; yet this exercise is not self-centred or self-circumscribed, but is fixed on and directed to the Saviour and the Lord. Faith is not only the beginning but the whole course of the Christian life, because the relation of the saved to the Saviour, and through Him of the child to the Father, is always receptivity for ever more abounding grace.

(iii) The blessing with which the Christian life begins, and which must ever attend it, is the *forgiveness of sin*, not merely the cancelling of its penalty, but the recovery of the soul from distrust of and estrangement from God, because of disobedience, to a childlike trust in and love for God, the motive of obedience. Paul calls this *the spirit of adoption*, not as making the relation less real and more formal, but to emphasise the newness of the relation, the change from the former attitude to God. While, as the writer at least understands the Christian Gospel, it teaches a universal Fatherhood of God, a love impartial and beneficent to good and bad alike, yet it teaches also that the response of man is not universal; for to be a child of God is not merely to be the object of God's fatherly love, but to accept that love in confidence and obedience. Thus we have the seeming paradox, that while God is the Father of all men, not all men are God's children; for this is not a physical relation, in which the terms would be strictly correlative, but a moral and spiritual relation in which universal grace on the one hand does not meet with universal faith on the other. Ritschl takes exception to our speaking of the love of man to God, as he thinks gratitude, reverence, and obedience, all summed up in faith, are more appropriate to the relation. In so far as he shrank from the sentimental intimacy which has some-

times disfigured pietism, one may entirely sympathise with him; but if we give love its full meaning, as one self giving itself to and finding itself in another, and in this exercising the whole personality, we need not shrink from speaking of love to God. It is gratitude, reverence, and obedience, but it is also an intimacy of communion which none of these words adequately express.[1]

(iv) When the love of God is fully received, and love for God freely exercised, there will be the *peace of God*, which passes all understanding (Phil. iv. 7), there will be more than conquest over temptation (Rom. viii. 37), there will be the perfecting of Christ's strength in man's weakness, there will be sufficiency of grace for every need (2 Cor. xii. 9), there will be victory over death with its terror (1 Cor. xv. 57), there will be certainty of eternal life. Outward circumstances, however adverse they seem, will be accepted as the working together of all things for good (Rom. viii. 28). The moral problem especially is solved. On the one hand, the constraining love of Christ will offer a new and potent motive. As the Christian says to himself 'To me to live is Christ' (1 Phil. i. 21), he identifies himself not with appetites and passions, pleasures and ambitions, but with the holy love of God. On the other hand, faith will claim and use a new and prevailing power, the Spirit of the Living God Himself withstanding and overcoming sin.

(2) This Christian life is a reality of human experience, and not a speculation of human thought, or an illusion of human imagination. Christian theology has sometimes set it forth in so abstract terms, justification, sanctification, and glorification, that it has seemed unreal to those not familiar with the terminology. That it is a reality may be shown in three ways.

(i) As we read the New Testament, we do find ourselves in a real world, witnessing a real life. The scholar with his absorption in the minutiæ of text, language, literary and historical problems, may sometimes lose the whole in

[1] See *The Ritschlian Theology*, pp. 359-60.

the parts, and the New Testament may in his hands become a cunningly constructed mosaic, which he will take to pieces, and the bits of which he will track to this and that source; but if we read with moral and religious appreciation, as men with moral perils, who seek deliverance and religious needs, who seek satisfaction, the total impression will be different. Yet this book that seems so real to us is illusive from beginning to end, if the life in Christ is not forgiveness, peace, deliverance, and hope.

(ii) Again, as we turn to the history of the Christian Church, great and many as have been the changes in creed and code, polity and ritual, yet the language of the saints is one. There have been periods in which the tide of Christian life has been at the ebb; there have been revivals in which pious aberrations have prevailed; but throughout the Church has had its saints. The outward forms of their saintliness may have differed much, but the inner secret has been the same, 'the life hid with Christ in God.' The fifty-first Psalm has been the confession of penitence throughout the generations; the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah has been the picture of divine grace unto sacrifice for salvation, on which the eyes of faith have rested with adoring gratitude, with a mingled joy and grief too deep for tears; the fourteenth chapter of the Gospel according to John has been read beside the bed of the dying, and has been *lux in tenebris*, the light of immortality in the valley of the shadow of death. Have all these saints walked in a vain show, and was the divine companionship in which they rejoiced in life and death a mocking jest?

(iii) To-day we can lift up our eyes unto the ends of the earth, and we find from men of all races, and colours, and tongues the same confession of the sufficiency of the Saviour, and the supremacy of the Lord. When we consider, on the one hand, the hindrances to the spread of the Gospel in racial prejudice, national exclusiveness, and religious bigotry, and, on the other, the indifference of the Christian Church as a whole to the world's claim, we do not wonder that the results of the missionary enterprise

have not been greater, but are rather surprised at the testimony, that is swelling in volume, to the truth of the Christian view of man, its call to penitence, its assurance of forgiveness, its power of renewal, its inspiration to moral victory, and its security that death itself is dead, because Christ has revealed God and redeemed man.

(3) Possibly to some readers the course of argument here pursued may appear strange and even inappropriate in a volume on Christian Apologetics; and a few words of justification may in closing appear necessary. The writer has endeavoured to maintain his interest in, and keep himself informed on, all the intellectual issues regarding the Christian faith that have been raised by modern scholarship and thought, and he has always tried 'to speak with the enemy in the gate.' But, on the other hand, he has had a wide and varied experience of practical Christian service, and has kept himself in touch with the world-wide and, in its variety, bewildering service of the Christian churches to mankind. And often has he turned with relief and gratitude from these intellectual issues to the realities of Christian life to-day, and found there confirmation of his own Christian faith. He does not depreciate the importance of these intellectual issues; he would not take refuge in any 'coward's castle' of pragmatism, or any other philosophy that sought escape from the peril and the labour of thought; but he does venture to insist that many of our discussions about Christianity are academic, because out of touch with reality. How Christianity finds men, what it does with them, how it leaves them, are data not to be neglected, but to be explained in any estimate of the truth and the worth of the Christian faith.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL

I

(1) CHRISTIANITY is a morality as well as a religion; it not only offers men the reality of forgiveness, but presents to them the ideal of holiness. As regards the relation of morality and religion in Christianity there are two things to be said.

(i) *Firstly*, religion and morality are inseparable, for Christian faith is faith in God as holy love. As the object of worship is moral perfection, there can be no divorce between ritual and righteousness. In some religions mortality has been hindered rather than helped by the conception of deity and the modes of worship. The Hebrew prophets were in constant protest against the popular religion, in which sacrifice was a substitute for social righteousness. Even the Christian Gospel has been sometimes so distorted and perverted as to become an encouragement to moral indifference or laxity; Christ's righteousness was so externally represented as a substitute for man's righteousness, that forgiveness seemed a release from rather than an incentive to holiness. 'Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?' is a question that exposes a real peril. But when the Christian Gospel is properly understood there is not, and cannot be, any divorce between morality and religion.

(ii) But, *secondly*, the Christian conception of morality is, in accordance with the religion itself, original. It is not an external law that is presented for obedience; it is an inward life that is guided in its self-expression. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus made a series of contrasts

between the old law and the new life; the old law forbade evil words and deeds, the new life excludes evil desires and dispositions. As has already been indicated, the love of God in Christ awakens the love of man, and this love is not only responsive towards God, but expansive towards man; it embraces not only the Heavenly Father, but also His earthly family. Christian morality has the same character as Christian piety, for it is the reception by, and the response of, man to the perfection of God. 'Be ye perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect,' says the Master. 'Be ye imitators of God as dear children,' echoes the servant. 'Love is the fulfilling of the law,' and 'Love doeth no ill to his neighbour.' But it may be said that there may be fondly foolish love that brings hurt, and fails to do good to the loved. But when we speak of Christian love, it is ever understood to be love of the same moral quality as God's. 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' Whatever the Old Testament sense of holiness may have been, the New Testament meaning has the definite connotation of the teaching and example of Jesus. The continuity between the divine love received and the human love expressed is seen in one of the most distinctive features of Christian morality. Returning again to the contrasts in the Sermon on the Mount we find not only the greater inwardness of Christian morality, but even a reversal of Jewish morality. Love is to know no restriction by race or religion, and love is to return good for evil. The reciprocity of a national righteousness is to be replaced by the generosity of a universal beneficence. 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'[1] Again the Servant echoes the Master, and adds a still more constraining instance of the love of God in the grace of Christ Himself. 'Be ye kind one

[1] Matthew v. 44-45.

to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' . . . 'Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.'[1] A sacrificial redemptive religion is the motive and the measure of a morality that at any cost forgives to the uttermost. This maximum demand does not exclude but presupposes the lesser claims of the common virtues in the ordinary human relations, already recognised by social standards. In the practical counsels of Paul's letters these lowlier duties are urged from the loftiest motives; but it is not in these that the distinctiveness of Christian morality lies. It is the universal beneficence—every kind of good to all manner of men—that imitates the Heavenly Father, whose care and bounty embraces all; it is the sacrificial forgiveness of all wrongs which reproduces the Saving Cross of Christ, that marks as unique the Christian morality, which is man's expression to his fellow-men of the love of God that he receives in Jesus Christ.

(2) In regard to this distinctive feature of the Christian morality two errors have to be avoided: on the one hand, it is not a *quietism* that refrains from human aspiration and endeavour in order that God alone may work; on the other hand, it is not a *mysticism* that, relying on the inner light of individual divine illumination, neglects to inquire what are the practical services of love which the existing conditions and necessities demand. On each of these points something must as briefly as possible be said.

(i) It has been pointed out that Christian morality is not obedience to an outward law, but the expression of an inward life; but this must not be misunderstood to mean that Christian morality is spontaneous as many vital processes are. It has been insisted that faith is not passivity but activity, and as the reception of the divine grace is active so must its expression be. As the new life does not instantaneously take possession of the whole

[1] Ephesians iv. 32-v. 2.

personality, but is limited by the conditions of its development, there will be conscious effort in maintaining as in expressing the new life. It will not be in one resolve that grace will subdue nature. But even when the renewal of the personality by grace has far advanced, there must be constant conscious volition in the manifold services of love; for God's action by His Spirit is not the suppression but the stimulation of human energy. It is true that as repeated good acts become virtuous habits, as the new life more and more transforms the whole personality, there will be less obstruction to the expression of love in life; but Christian morality can never become automatic, but to be personal must remain voluntary. The language of the New Testament of confidence, courage, and conquest declares the certainty of the sufficiency of God's grace, but does not deny the necessity of the exercise of faith, and often very strenuous faith.

(ii) As there must be the energy of will, so there must be the activity of mind. Wisdom must be eyes to love. A simple formula, like What would Jesus do? will not solve the problems of duty, for the answer to it would involve, on the one hand, a keen insight into the moral purpose and spirit of Jesus, and, on the other, a wide knowledge of the difference between the circumstances in which Jesus lived His earthly life, and those in which the follower of Jesus is to reproduce His example and teaching. While Jesus illustrated His general principles by special instances corresponding to the conditions around Him, these instances are not precedents for Christian behaviour in all times. Jesus was not a casuist in the good sense of the word even; He left no complete moral code, providing a rule of action in all conceivable circumstances. Unless His moral discernment had been accompanied by an absolute omniscience, had He made the attempt He would have bound His ideals in the fetters of local and temporal custom and need, as has Mohammed in the precision of his regulations about polygamy and slavery. His general principles, illustrated by but not identified

with His special instances, are adaptable to the varied conditions and the varying circumstances of human life; but how the adaptation is to be made in each case demands knowledge and wisdom.

(3) This warning that Christian morality is not *casuistry* must be emphasised. The Christian ideal does not lay down rules of conduct to be literally obeyed; it recognises the authority and requires the activity of the individual conscience; and, as Paul showed in his treatment of the relation of the 'weak' and the 'strong' brethren in Rome,[1] it enjoins the most reverent solicitude for another man's conscience, so as not to lead it into error or doubt. All legalism, all attempt by any ecclesiastical authority to coerce the individual conscience, is contrary to the Christian estimate of the value and the dignity of every man as the child of God. But, on the other hand, the city of God is not intended to be a moral Babel, where in the confusion of moral judgments there can be no common moral activity. Each believer will exercise his conscience as the member of a society, the collective wisdom of which he will so respect as to be guided by it wherever it is possible; and, as he will not wittingly injure the conscience of, so he will not wantonly impose his conscience on others. The Christian attitude in morals is removed as far from *individual anarchism*, the danger of the present, as from *social despotism*, the threat of the future. Recognising the rights of the individual conscience on the one hand, and the claims of the collective standards on the other, Christian ethics has as its task to apply the Christian ideal to the conditions and needs of each society or period; and Christian Apologetics must defend that ideal against objections, and commend it as best fitted to solve the moral problem.

(4) The primary source of the distinctive Christian ideal is to be found in the *teaching and example of Jesus*. If in doctrine the apostles developed what was given in germ in the teaching of Jesus, in regard to Christian duty they

[1] Romans xiv.

did not add anything substantially new thereto, except in so far as the relations developed within the Christian society itself gave concrete application to the general principles of Jesus. In recent years the morality taught by lip and life by Jesus has been in various ways challenged; the defence of the Christian ideal must be directed especially to meet these objections. But the Apostolic Age offers an instance of the Christian ideal, not completely apprehended and not perfectly applied, at work in the world. Paul's organic view of the Christian Church, and of the consequent function of the members of it, is a very important contribution to Christian thought. But while the Christian ideal was original, it did not come into a world that had no moral customs, standards, and institutions. We are learning to-day to appreciate more highly the moral thought of Jew and Gentile alike. Here Christianity did not come to destroy but to fulfil.[1] Paul enjoins his converts in Philippi to give attention to, and endeavour to attain all moral excellences recognised in, the society to which they belonged,[2] and when a list of Christian virtues was made it included Plato's four, *wisdom*, *justice*, *temperance*, *courage*, together with the Christian graces, *faith*, *hope*, and *love*.

II

(1) In chapter four the recent representation of the teaching of Jesus as mainly, if not altogether, eschatological has already been dealt with. Christian morality is represented as a *penitential discipline* or an *interim ethic*, and the suggestion is that it is not of permanent value and universal validity. If that contention were sound, it would be waste of time for us here and now to discuss the ideal of Jesus. But in opposition to this view several considerations can be urged.

(i) The dominance of eschatology in the teaching of Jesus has been grossly exaggerated; and plausibility can be secured for this view only by most violent critical

[1] Matthew v. 17.

[2] Philippians iv. 8.

methods, by depriving Jesus Himself of all utterances that go beyond the narrow circle of eschatological ideas, and transferring all these to the Christian consciousness in its later developments. The objections to this course have already been sufficiently indicated.

(ii) But even if this criticism were to establish its claims, the result would be that Jesus Himself would appear less original, and the community He founded less dependent on Him for its thought on God and goodness; but we might still include in the Christian ideal the moral and religious truths in the Gospels which lie outside of the circle of eschatological ideas, to which on this theory the teaching of Jesus Himself was for the most part confined.

(iii) It is an assumption, which must be closely scrutinised, that the morality enjoined under the influence of the hope of a speedy coming of God's kingdom must be only a *penitential discipline* or *interim ethic*. The prophets of the Hebrew nation preached righteousness in view of the coming judgment of Jehovah; and the morality they preached was not only far in advance of the customs and standards of their own age, but even contained principles the full application of which modern society has not attempted. Even if Jesus stood in this prophetic succession, and the Kingdom of God was for Him an imminent manifestation of the divine power in human history, it depends altogether on what His conception of God was whether the morality He preached in preparation for that event has a merely temporary value. If He conceived God as Father, as holy love (and only a criticism that casts aside all restraints of sober judgment could deny this), then the morality He enjoined as fitting men for the Kingdom of God would be as valuable as His idea of God. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews describes faith as 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen' (xi. 1), and in the roll-call of the heroes of faith that follows he presents to us a succession of men who were ennobled and not lowered by their faith. It is a curious assumption that an ethic framed in view of the

immediate presence of God in human history, and the imminent fulfilment of His purpose, should be inferior to an ethic that gave to God and His will a subordinate place. To think of holy love as in the heart of human life, and of the judgment of that holy love as at the very door, would, one might rather suppose, inspire a morality which was not for man's moment, but for God's eternity. As Jesus welcomed the coming of the Kingdom, His preaching was not 'panic' preaching; as for Him the Kingdom was the Kingdom of the perfect Heavenly Father, there was nothing temporary or local in the righteousness of the Kingdom. We can, therefore, judge the teaching of Jesus on its merits, without even the supposition that its value or validity is affected by His expectation of a rapid fulfilment of God's will regarding mankind and not a long course of human progress. For even we who have got so accustomed to the idea of evolution that we cannot think of God as fulfilling Himself in any other way cannot live more worthily than as ever in God's immediate presence, and under the imminent judgment of His holy love.

(2) But apart from the theory of the predominance of eschatology in the teaching of Jesus, exception has been taken to the Christian ideal on the ground that it pollutes morality by introducing religious sanctions, and makes it less effective in this world by its other-worldliness.

(i) Of course, if there is no God, and so religion is an illusion; and if there is no immortality, and so the hope of it is deceptive, it is desirable that morality should be kept apart both from the belief in God and the hope of immortality as far as possible; but if, on the contrary, there are good reasons for holding the belief in God, and good grounds on which the hope of immortality may rest, the initial assumption that morality should have no relation to the experienced or the expected reality is unjustified. It is surely desirable that morality should have as wide a horizon, and as far a prospect as is possible. If the moral order is not confined to human society, the resultant of its customs, institutions, and standards, but

has an eternal reality in God, and a progressive manifestation in human history, morality cannot be severed from religion, for religion gives it a wider meaning and a higher worth. If man's moral development is not confined to this earthly life, but is continued and completed in a life beyond, it can attempt, because it may expect, greater things.

(ii) There is a conception of the relation of the belief in God and the hope of immortality that is not unknown within the Christian Church to which very serious exception may be taken. If by religious sanctions be meant the hope of heaven or the fear of hell as the enforcements of morality, then religion would pollute morality, for it would put in the place of the proper moral motive a selfish impulse. The man who is honest because honesty is the best policy is not morally honest at all, and so the man who is moral that he may escape misery, and secure happiness hereafter, is not moral. But this is not the Christian motive. When Jesus commanded the disciples to love their enemies, the inducement He offered was 'that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven' (Matt. v. 45). To have filial communion with God, to have a filial resemblance to God, this is not a motive that makes morality impure or interested, but relates man's temporal endeavour after perfection to the eternal reality of perfection in God. So again, when Paul confesses that it is the love of Christ which constraineth us, it is not a non-moral motive of a sentimental affection to which he appeals, but a personal devotion and submission to a perfect personality who reproduces His judgment on sin and His devotion to holiness in us.

(iii) The Christian imagination has sometimes made of heaven another world, only brighter, better, and more blessed than this world, and has longed for its ease, comfort, and joy; and it is unfortunate that so many hymns about heaven so exclusively give prominence to this 'other-worldliness.' But what is the Christian hope itself? 'Now we see through a glass, darkly; but then

face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.' And the clearer version brings closer resemblance. 'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is.' [1] Religion as filial communion with, and resemblance to God as holy love, and the hope of immortality as the hope of the clearer vision of and the closer resemblance to Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, do not pollute morality, but put it in its proper divine and eternal context.

(3) The conflict between Geology and Genesis, between the Darwinian theory of evolution and the Christian doctrine of the Fall, does not trouble us any longer; but it is impossible to ignore the influence on moral ideas of the Darwinian theory, which has provoked one of the most formidable attacks on the Christian ideal. The phrases 'struggle for existence' and 'survival of the fittest' have been taken out of their proper physical context, and been intruded into the moral realm. Jingoism and Imperialism of the blatant sort are Darwinianism in morals and in politics. For such an application of the theory neither Darwin nor other exponents of it are to be held responsible. Darwin expressly repudiated the application of the principle of 'the struggle for existence' to human society; Huxley asserted a different principle in the moral order and the cosmic process; and Wallace finds the contrast so great that he will not explain man's mental and moral endowments as he does his physical descent. It was Nietzsche who transformed Darwinianism into a rule of action for man; and where his name is not even known, his justification of the self-assertion of human individuality has been readily welcomed. For Nietzsche the Christian morality is *servile*: it offers the rules for the conduct of slaves.[2] It is curious to compare with this view the recent

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12; 1 John iii. 2.
[2] See for a brief statement of his views Ludovici's *Nietzsche: His Life and Work.*

theory that Christianity originated in a slave revolt. Would a 'servile' morality originate in, or give inspiration to, a revolt of slaves? What we are now concerned with is the question, Can the teaching of Jesus about the love that suffers and forgives wrong, that offers no resistance, and cherishes no revenge, be properly described as 'servile,' and does it give to morality a wrong direction away from the more desirable self-assertion? In answering this question we must take into account the following considerations:

(i) Self-assertion is the natural impulse of man, which he derives from his animal ancestry. It needs no encouragement; but, as all morality and society shows, demands constant restraint if man is to live in peaceful associations with his fellows. In pagan morals, while restraints were imposed, there was admiration for this quality. The wise man is a man who is self-sufficient in his judgments. The temperate man restrains his appetites, not from regard to others, but that he may get all the pleasure out of them he can without any of the resultant pain of undue self-indulgence. The courageous man asserts himself in face of peril or pain. The high appreciation of justice as the social bond does modify this ideal. Christian morality was first proclaimed in a world which needed not that any encouragement should be given to self-assertion, but rather required that all emphasis should be put on its restraint. The active virtues could be taken for granted; what needed assertion were the passive virtues, despised and neglected.

(ii) Jesus addressed His disciples in the certain expectation that they would be persecuted for His name's sake. Many of the counsels in the Gospels are concerned with the proper behaviour in persecution. Jesus does not advise patient submission because resistance was impossible, that is, from a cowardly motive; but because He believes that resistance can excite only more violent enmity, and submission alone—wrong borne not only without complaint, but even joyously—can at last change hate

into pity, oppression into tolerance, and that change is to be desired not so much for the relief of the persecuted, as for the benefit of the persecutor. It is to win men from sin to God that wrong is to be endured and not avenged. The children of the God who is good even to the evil cannot be anything but good, and they are encouraged in this goodness by the hope that even the evil may be won for goodness. It is an entire distortion of Jesus' teaching to suggest even that there is any appeal to cowardice. Jesus spake in heavenly wisdom, as enjoining men to follow the ways of the Heavenly Father, and yet He has been justified by earthly prudence. It was by its martyrdoms that the Christian Church at last conquered the Roman Empire. Even fully recognising the lower motives which entered into Constantine's decision, who can doubt that the position the Church held, which made it even possible for a Roman emperor to think of confessing himself a Christian, had been won not by force of arms, but, first of all, and most of all, by its witness unto death? Again and again in human history has the patience of the saints won the victory for their faith.

(iii) It is absurd to suggest that such submission as is recorded in the stories of the martyrs is an instance of cowardice and not courage, servility and not heroism. It takes less courage to hit back than to suffer the blow; it is more heroic to endure patiently than to resist violently. Anger is a natural passion, to yield to which requires no moral strength. The restraint of anger involves a self-control which shows moral power. The demand that Jesus made was not on moral weakness, but on moral strength; and it is only a false conception of courage and strength, which exalts natural impulse above moral resolve, that can ever lead us to think otherwise.

(iv) The teaching about non-resistance and the return of good for evil is an application of the supreme Christian principle of love; and it must be always understood in accordance with and not contradiction of that principle. When another's good requires that his fault should be

rebuked, or that his wrong should be punished, then love enjoins that the word of rebuke be spoken, and the deed that punishes should be done; but it must ever be as an obligation of love to another, and not as a relief to personal feeling, that rebuke should be given or punishment inflicted. Jesus' teaching does not exclude moral discipline or civil government, as the next paragraph will show.

(v) With these explanations we can face the question: Is it for the good of the individual and of the other individuals who compose the same society that his life should be ordered by the principle of self-assertion, or by the Christian principle of love to others, of self-restraint for the good of others? In following the first course a common good can never be attained; the 'strong' man in his self-assertion must make the 'weak' his instruments and victims; as his 'morality' succeeds, others are debarred from being 'moral.' By mutual love a common good is alone made possible; a morality embracing all can result.

(4) At the opposite extreme from Nietzsche's view is the interpretation of the Christian ideal given by Tolstoy. Love as non-resistance of wrong in his judgment excludes and condemns punishment, war, even government. In his view Christianity is *anarchic*. In estimating the value or the validity of this view there are again several considerations that must be urged.

(i) Seeing how far Christendom, with its wasteful expenditure on armaments, with, in many lands at least, its cruel oppression of subjects by rulers, falls short of the Christian ideal of love, one can understand and sympathise with Tolstoy's attitude. Government, even nominally Christian, as encouraging militarism and exercising tyranny, may appear as itself one of the evils of which Christianity is to rid us. But, on the other hand, we must not ignore what government does for the good of human society. There is the restraint of evil, national and individual. Even armaments are a condition of the preservation of

peace. If a nation given to self-assertion were confronted only with nations that had made no provision for self-defence, it would quickly impose its yoke upon them. Even the lover of peace and the enemy of militarism may confess that Europe as an 'armed camp' is preferable to a Europe under the heel of one oppressor. So, too, a nation without police, judges and prisons would soon become not the refuge, but the domain of criminals. Of course, if Christendom were really, nationally and individually, Christian, if the inward restraint and constraint of love were universal, then the protection of law with force as its servant would not be necessary; but it is only to prejudice men against Christian morality to assert that it demands here and now what the existing conditions make absolutely impracticable. But does the Christian ideal as Jesus taught it, as the Apostolic Age understood it, demand anything as impracticable as the abolition of all government?

(ii) Jesus in His teaching carefully abstained from any political programme, and He addressed Himself to a community that had no expectation of being entrusted with the carrying out of a political programme. The popular Jewish expectation was of a political Deliverer and Ruler, and before Jesus even sought from His disciples the confession of Messiahship He was careful to correct these views, and to substitute a hope of moral and religious deliverance in His person and work. He would not divide an inheritance; He admitted the right of the priest to pronounce the leper clean; He would not encourage any withholding of taxes from Cæsar; He even accepted the scribes as interpreters of the law; He bade Peter pay the temple dues; only on marriage and the family did He pronounce any decisive judgment.[1] If He did not give any directions as to the proper methods of government, He recognised the existing authorities in Church and State; and it is only by an inference from His teaching about

[1] Luke xii. 13-15; v. 14; Matt. xxii. 15-22; xvii. 27; xix. 3-9; Mark vii. 9-13.

non-resistance that He can be regarded as condemning government as such. In the Apostolic Church there was a recognition of the authority of the Roman Empire, and there is no hint in Paul's letters that the government appeared as an illegitimate usurpation. Not a word favouring Anarchism can be found in the New Testament.

(iii) In addressing to His disciples His counsels about non-resistance He had in view a community, persecuted by the government, and not a community which could have much influence on the government. The primitive Christians were subjects of the Roman Empire with no voice or share in the government, and not citizens in the modern sense, participating by their vote in the government. We must not apply without qualification to citizens governing counsels addressed to subjects governed. Submission to persecution does not involve, as its counterpart, abstinence from any participation in government in restraint of wrong or in protection of virtue. The counsel to submit to the oppression of a persecuting government does not establish the universal principle that government may not exercise force to suppress lawlessness. The last thing Jesus was thinking about was what it was legitimate or illegitimate for a government to do. We may condemn the persecution of saints as a wrong without maintaining the toleration of criminals as a duty. What Jesus said about the behaviour of His disciples when persecuted is quite irrelevant to the problems of modern government.

(iv) From the general principle, of which these counsels were a particular application, we may, however, learn that the government which is vindictive in spirit and purpose, and even in punishment, and does not seek as well as the common good even the good of those punished, is non-Christian. It is only in the interests of the common good that war can be waged, or law enforced with the moral sanction of Christianity.

(5) The view of Tolstoy is an eccentricity of genius that is not likely to exercise any widespread influence. A more directly practical issue is raised by the question

whether the Christian ideal is *individualist* or *socialist*. This is the most urgent problem of the hour, and each side in the present controversy claims Jesus for itself. It is probable that teaching such as His cannot be described simply in the catchwords of this or any other hour; but we cannot dismiss the issue with so general a consideration, but must attempt a fuller discussion.

(i) What has already been said in other connections must be recalled here; Jesus came as a moral and religious Teacher, to say nothing here about His unique function as Saviour and Lord, and a political or even social programme did not even come into His view. On marriage and the family He did pronounce Himself very definitely in opposition to the lax views of the scribes on divorce and the duty of children to parents,[1] but in each case the interest was predominantly moral. In fact, it seems to be altogether a mistake to suppose that in reference to divorce, He was formulating the principle of the divorce laws of any state. He was denouncing as adultery the practice of getting a divorce from one wife in order to marry another, and the laxity of the interpreters of the law in sanctioning this practice; and anything like legislation for any nation was not even in His thoughts. He lays down no rules and offers no counsels for any other social institutions. His aim was to hold aloof from any movement of political or social change, such as the popular expectations assigned to the Messiah. It cannot be said that Jesus was a social reformer in the modern sense, of either desiring or advocating any precise changes in the social arrangements of Judaism.

(ii) In His teaching Jesus laid great stress on the individual, and the worth of each soul to God. He did not think in classes or masses, but in ones. Each man, whether socially outcast, morally depraved, or religiously indifferent, is of so great value to God that God sorrows in his loss and rejoices in his recovery; he has the dignity

[1] For a discussion of many of the questions raised in this chapter the writer may refer to his book *My Brother's Keeper*.

of the child of God, called to imitate the perfection of his Father; the reverence for humanity in each man which Kant enjoined finds clear expression in the teaching of Jesus. Any social action that treats individual men as instruments, and not as persons, is condemned from the Christian standpoint. Especially in the moral conscience and religious consciousness is the individual man to be respected. This sacred individuality must set the bounds to social authority in morals as in religion; and a society that usurped the function of the moral conscience as regards duty, or the religious consciousness as regards belief in God would stand in opposition to this Christian individualism.

(iii) But as this individual value is asserted of all men alike, individualism in the sense of selfishness is absolutely excluded. Every man must value his neighbour as he values himself as the child of God, and his rights from others are to be measured by the claims of others upon him. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' 'Whatever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them,'[1] sets self and others on an equality. As the principle of Christian morality is love, the Christian individuality can be realised only in service to, and sacrifice for society. The term *Socialism* is so identified in current usage with a particular theory of the ownership of capital that it can only mislead to represent Christianity as socialistic as well as individualistic. But this can be said confidently that the Christian personality must recognise social claim no less than individual right; and realises itself not in selfishness, but in love, not in keeping life, but in losing it, and so finding it. The Christian ideal is above the antithesis of individualism and socialism; for it does not recognise any necessary opposition of self and others, but a common life in dependence on, and submission to the common Fatherhood of God.

(iv) It is an error to suppose, as is being done to-day, that the Christian ideal is directly for or against economic

[1] Matt. xxii. 39; vii. 12.

Socialism. On the one hand, it may be urged that Christianity so fully admits the rights of others, that the surrender of private property in favour of collective ownership would not go beyond its demand. On the other, it may be held that as the service of others it enjoins is voluntary service, solely from the constraint of love, and as in that service the generous use of private property is not an unimportant factor, the possession of such property, to be so used, is one condition of the full exercise of the Christian personality. It is certain that the Christian ideal condemns any economic arrangement which is unjust, hurtful, or even unloving in disregarding the needs of others.

(6) But the mention of private property at once raises another question: Is not the Christian ideal *ascetic*? Did not Jesus prefer poverty to riches? Did He not enjoin mendicancy on His disciples on their first mission? Was He not utterly indifferent to industry and commerce, to art and culture generally? St. Francis of Assisi believed the life of poverty and beggary to be the necessary imitation of Jesus; and the *evangelical counsels* of the monastic life were held to mark a higher stage of Christian living than the *evangelical commands* of the secular business. This question cannot be answered as easily as modern Protestantism in practice, if not also in theory, assumes.

(i) Jesus did undoubtedly regard wealth as a greater peril to the soul than poverty.[1] Covetousness was to Him the soul's suicide. The inward treasures alone had value for Him. The gain of the whole world could not compensate for the loss of the soul. As His own miracles, and His commendation of the acts for relief of need and suffering show, He did not desire want to be unremoved, pain unassuaged, or grief uncomforted. One cannot escape the conclusion, however, that, contrary to dominant opinion to-day, he did not regard personality as so entirely dependent on environment as many advocates of social

[1] See Luke vi. 20, 21; xvi. 19-31.

reform make it out to be; but believed that by faith in God the soul could triumph over the most adverse circumstances. What the world regards as the most favourable conditions appeared to Him as the most perilous, as encouraging a self-sufficiency and self-satisfaction antagonistic to a humble dependence on God. The contrast between this and the modern attitude within Christendom itself is only too apparent.

(ii) Jesus' instructions to His disciples about their journey (Matt. x. 9-11) were counsels adapted to the local and temporary conditions, and are to be given a permanent and universal application just as little as the voluntary communism of the primitive community in Jerusalem, which met an immediate necessity, but cannot be regarded as offering the model for all times and places of a Christian society (Acts ii. 44, 45). This is so obvious that it seems hardly necessary to strengthen the argument by insisting, as has been done, that if all Christians took to begging, there would soon be no one to bestow alms. In His parables Jesus assumes the practice of various callings and the possession of private property without any censure or even question; and it is certain that He never intended His followers to be all beggars.

(iii) It is true that Jesus has nothing to say about the manifold interests and pursuits which constitute our modern culture and civilisation. He lived, taught and worked amid surroundings in which life was simple, the bodily needs were few and easily met, and in which luxury was unknown. On literature, art, science, philosophy He had no opinions and offered no judgment. But He knew God as Father, and He knew man as the child of God who might be lost, but could be found; He concentrated His interest and His effort on what is most important for man —His dependence on God, and His vocation to goodness; and He made it possible for man to trust in God fully, and fulfil his calling freely. He answered the highest question the mind can ask, and met the deepest need the heart can feel, and yielded the greatest help the soul can crave. The

interests and the pursuits He did not even know can all be purified and elevated by the holy sonship towards God He brought to man.

(iv) There is, however, a self-indulgence in modern culture and civilisation which the Christian ideal condemns. Jesus was not an ascetic in the narrow sense of the word (Matt. xi. 19); He did not enjoin abstinences or pains of the flesh for their own sake, as having any merit before God or value for man; but He did enjoin self-denial, the sacrifice of the most prized possessions or the most cherished affections wherever the Kingdom of God, that is, fidelity to truth, goodness, or Himself, might require it (Matt. xvi. 24-26). The ease, comfort and luxury which many Christians allow themselves while all around there is so much misery unrelieved and want unremoved, one can feel sure would have grieved His heart, might even have stirred Him to righteous indignation. The only person whom He expressly consigned to the eternal torments was the rich man who, faring sumptuously and arrayed gorgeously, left the beggar at his own gates untended save by the dogs of the street (Luke xvi. 19-26). The Lazarus at the gate of the modern society, calling itself Christian, is a proof of how far short it falls of not only realising, but even recognising the Christian ideal. It is a problem the difficulty of which the writer himself feels so keenly that he would not write about it harshly or hastily; yet there is a glaring contradiction between the modern Christian estimate of culture and civilisation and the Christian ideal. We are forced to face the question, Is our modern progress, with its enormous increase of all our material resources, a mistake and a danger? It is probable that there has been an advance in material well-being in the community generally; but at the one end of the social scale there are a luxury and ostentation which are enslaving the soul to the material, and at the other end there are a misery and squalor which are brutalising men and women, and even children. However contrary to all the tendencies of the age, would not a Christian asceticism be desirable? If

Christian men followed more closely in the footsteps of Jesus who did not please Himself, but denied Himself; and regulated their expenditure not for self-indulgence, but for the greatest benefit to the community, not by pauperising their poorer neighbours, but by affording the conditions for industry and independence, the most threatening aspect of our modern society would cease to trouble us. Our modern culture and civilisation have not been so successful morally or socially as to be justified in challenging the Christian ideal, which places the Kingdom of God first, and leaves all other things to the Father's care (Matt. vi. 33).

III

(1) Having met the objections which are being to-day urged against the Christian ideal, especially as presented in the teaching of Jesus, we may now in concluding this discussion consider how that ideal can be realised. It is an ideal, and not a code or a polity. It is a supreme principle, in which morality and religion are conjoined, in which the interests of self and others are harmonised, for the one Christian commandment, of which all Christian living is but the fulfilment, is absolute love to God, and equal love to self and to others (Matt. xxii. 34-40). The content to be given to this love, the special applications to be made of this general principle, depend on the teaching and example of Jesus, the doctrine and practice of the Christian community, the moral standards and institutions of the human society around, and the enlightenment and quickening of the individual Christian conscience by the ever-present and ever-active Spirit of God. Gautama the Buddha founded a monastic community, and gave it a set of rules for the ordering of its life. Mohammed founded a nation with a common faith, and from time to time legislated for its common life; and the Koran remains the supreme law book of Islam. But Jesus did not give to His community either a code or a polity. If He had

done so, it would have been fettered by local custom and temporary expedient, as are the two religions just mentioned which, claiming to be universal in character, are also missionary in effort, and are the most formidable rivals Christianity has to meet. The legalism and formalism of Pharisaic Judaism, which Jesus so unreservedly denounced, would be introduced into His religion, were we to take all His counsels as rules and all His acts as precedents. The form of His teaching was necessarily often determined by temporary and local conditions, and we must detach the kernel of permanent and universal principle from this husk. So also as regards the doctrine and practice of the Apostolic Church, it is not the pattern to which every Christian society must conform, but it embodies a spirit of holy fellowship in which every society claiming to be Christian must participate. As there is moral progress in human society, the Christian Church will ever seek to confirm what seems morally best in existing standards and institutions, while at the same time endeavouring to realise the Christian ideal in and through these. If true to that ideal, it will enforce not the minimum, but the maximum moral obligation already recognised. Casuistry is utterly foreign to Christianity, because it, on the one hand, honours the individual conscience, and, on the other, recognises and expects the guidance and guardianship of the Christian community by the Spirit of God. The refusal to be bound by rules and precedents does not make the Christian ideal too vague to be practical; although it necessitates, on the one hand, study of economic, social, and political conditions which affect moral obligations, and, on the other, the moral insight which is dependent on a pure and worthy motive, to discern what is the application necessary of the general principle.

(2) It must be insisted that the Christian ideal is for the Christian community primarily, and only secondarily for human society generally. It is not a law prescribed to all, but a life described of some. The attempt to translate the Christian ideal into legislation for a society not yet

thoroughly Christian would be bound to end in failure; and what the Christian has to be on his guard against is the impatience that would impose the yoke of Christ on those who have not yet come to Him.

(i) The filial perfection of holy love to all that Jesus requires can be the aim only of those who have been through Him brought into the filial relation to God. The forgiven learn how to forgive, and the beloved of God how to show the godlike love to men. The realisation of the Christian ideal depends then on the reality of the Christian religion in an individual or a society.

(ii) Accordingly, instead of the Church trying to impose the Christian ideal by legislation on a society, the majority of which is not yet Christian, it should seek to win men for Christ, so that the Christian ideal will not present itself to them as a law to be obeyed, but as the life they desire to attain. If in the past the Christian Church had been less eager to legislate, and more anxious to convert, more concerned about renewing the character, and less about ruling the conduct of men, the Christian ideal might have been nearer realisation than it is.

(iii) For this consideration must be pressed, that from the Christian standpoint the inward constraint must take the place of the outward restraint, and legislation is of far less value than conversion. It may be questioned whether the demand urged in the Christian name for more and more legal enforcement of morality is as genuinely Christian in spirit as it professes to be. It is primarily by new men and not new laws that the Christian ideal will be realised.

(iv) The Christian community, however, must in its own fellowship present to the world a realisation of the Christian ideal. But can it not be said, with too great a measure of truth, that the churches through their public assemblies endeavour to require that the State should be more Christian than they are in their own life and work? The churches to-day are more in danger of becoming the salt that has lost its savour than of failing in the endeavour

to be the leaven in the lump of human society. Yet the Christian character of society generally can be maintained only as the Christian churches remain genuinely and intensely Christian.

(v) The common conscience must be so educated by the presentation and illustration of the Christian ideal in the Christian churches, that the social order will progressively realise that Christian ideal, but the social order must follow the common conscience. The attempt to legislate much in advance of public opinion is sure to result in reaction; a little in advance it may be, for legislation is educative; and the common conscience recognises the legal enactment as moral obligation, if too sudden and severe a demand is not made upon it.

(vi) In the realisation of the Christian ideal we must recognise that evolution is God's method in morals as in nature; it is only by a gradual progress that man's co-operation with God's advancing purpose can be secured. To ask God to bring His Kingdom speedily by His power is to deny the moral and religious character of that Kingdom. God must train before He can use His human agents, and this gradual progress is the most effective education.

(vii) Recognising this, however, we must still urge that the progress is slower than it need be, or than God wills it to be. For Jesus all things were possible to faith, because God can do all things. If Christians exercised a more constant and confident faith in God, there would be a heroic quality in Christian living which would make the realisation of the Christian ideal more speedy. The fault lies not in the ideal, nor in the lack of grace which faith may claim for its realisation, but in the fact that Christ's demand for faith is not being met.

(viii) These considerations are not irrelevant to a work on Christian Apologetics, as the Christian ideal is most seriously challenged by those who point to its slow realisation as an evidence of its ineffectiveness; but if we recognise on the one hand that the larger and loftier the

ideal, the more time must we allow for man's moral education to apprehend, appreciate, and apply it, and, on the other, that here as in all human history man fails to fulfil his obligation and to use his opportunity, the objection will be met. Faith is straitened even while grace abounds.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHRISTIAN HOPE

I

(1) It has already been necessary to mention several times the Christian eschatology, or doctrine of the last things, the content of the Christian hope. It is held by some scholars that the teaching of Jesus was mainly eschatological, that He was influenced not only by the prophetic literature of the Old Testament, but also by the Apocalyptic writings of contemporary Judaism. Even if Jesus did expect a very speedy coming of the Kingdom of God in His own return in power and glory, it was not the sole, or main, content of His revelation; and we have already considered the other moral and religious truths it contained. In the Apostolic Age there was a very intense expectation of the Second Advent of the Lord even within the first Christian generation, for Paul in his Epistles to the Thessalonians has, on the one hand, to offer his comfort to bereaved believers, who thought that their friends who had died would thereby lose the good of the Second Advent, and, on the other, to rebuke the disorders arising out of these too excited hopes.[1] Paul's own mind seems to have wavered between the expectation of surviving to the Coming of Christ, and his conviction at times of bodily weakness and suffering that it would be by death, as absent from the body, that he would be present with the Lord. Towards the end of his life he seems even to have desired death as release from present distress.[2] The eschatological programme of primitive Christianity

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 13-18; 2 Thess. iii. 10-12.
[2] Compare 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52; 2 Cor. v. 1-10; Phil. i. 21-24.

was influenced not only by Hebrew prophecy, but also by Jewish apocalyptic; but was distinguished from both by the position assigned by Christian faith to the Lord Jesus Christ. At the Second Advent of Christ from heaven the dead would be raised, the final judgment would take place, and the righteous would pass into eternal blessedness, and the wicked would suffer the eternal death. The belief in a resurrection of the saints prior to the general resurrection, and a reign of Christ with them for a thousand years (Rev. xx. 1-3) on earth before the final revolt and destruction of the powers of evil is a curious eschatological speculation that seems not to have had any wide currency.

(2) While Christian thought generally has not busied itself with eschatology, these apocalyptic views have had an unwholesome fascination for some minds; and the commentaries on Daniel and the Revelation are for the most part a monument of human folly. But reasons must be shown why in the Christian hope, which we can defend and commend, we cannot include this eschatological programme taken literally.

(i) It cannot be regarded as the spontaneous and inevitable expression of the Christian faith itself, but as, for the most part, a foreign element intruded into the web of distinctively Christian ideas. Christ's ultimate triumph in the world, and the believer's eternal life with Him, are beliefs which spring out of the Christian faith itself; but the form in which these convictions are expressed is borrowed from Jewish apocalyptic as well as Hebrew prophecy. We must here apply the methods of interpretation that are proper to these kinds of literature. The failure to distinguish the method of apocalyptic from that of prophecy has involved Christian thought in endless mazes of error. Neither can be, or must be taken literally, for both indulge freely in figurative language; apocalyptic uses arbitrary symbols even more freely than prophecy ever did. Through failure to use the proper methods of exegesis Christian theology has dogmatised poetry; spiritual reality has been apprehended as physical fact.

(ii) There is one characteristic of the prophetic consciousness for which due allowance must be made. To the prophet his own age is so pregnant with moral and religious issues, that he sees the divine judgment on human history as imminent. He does not perceive the long and slow processes of the divine purpose; behind the events of the present he sees the final issue of human history. It is this sense of the immediate divine presence, involving the hope of the instant divine action, that invests present events with their decisive significance, and gives such urgency to the threat of judgment or offer of mercy. Because the prophet's insight sees the eternal in the temporal, the far-off future appears to him as at the very door. In this way we may account for the expectation in the Apostolic Age of an immediate Second Advent of Christ.

(iii) It is evident that the future can be spoken of only in figurative language, can be envisaged only in terms of the present. So constant is change in human history, that the conditions of thought and life in one generation do not correspond to these of the preceding or the succeeding. Prophecy, even of events in the present order, cannot be literal, still less when what is involved is another order of existence. How can the temporal express the eternal, the mortal the immortal? Earth cannot speak the language of heaven. How could the first century anticipate and describe the conditions of the last century of human history? How at the commencement of the Kingdom of God on earth could the consummation be seen in open vision? Without supposing psychological monstrosities, which even divine omnipotence would not make credible, we cannot treat even the New Testament as a handbook to heaven or hell.

(iv) We cannot by any ingenuity of exegesis escape the fact that the Apostolic Age expected a speedy Second Coming of Christ in power and glory. That Second Coming has not taken place; and we may ask ourselves whether, forced to change the date, we should not also be led to

change the form of our hope. We have come to recognise that God's method in history as in nature is evolutionary and not catastrophic, although evolution does not exclude periods of rapid human advance, and of decisive divine action. And to this conception of evolution we must adjust our interpretation of the eschatological teaching of the New Testament, based on the now duly recognised principle of interpreting prophetic and apocalyptic writings.

(3) Without entering into any minute discussion of the New Testament eschatology, there are four subjects in regard to which our Christian thought to-day must be defined—the Second Coming of Christ, the Resurrection of the Body, the General Judgment, and the Final Destiny.

(i) As regards the Second Coming of Christ, we may apply the principle of interpretation to the expectation of it that we apply to the predictions of the First Coming. Jesus claimed to fulfil the law and the prophets; but He fulfilled the Messianic hope not by a literal correspondence of His life with the prophetic predictions; but in filling full, carrying on to completeness the hope, He transcended, and necessarily transcended, the predictions. The Second Coming may be in the same measure conceived as transcending all the expectations of it. Surely the most vital Christian experience shows the direction in which we are to look. After the Resurrection the Christian community became assured of His own presence to save and bless, and did not experience an absence that must be ended by a Return. So intense a personal communion as Paul enjoyed, and as in some measure Christian saints since have enjoyed, is a fulfilment, real or partial, of the expectation. It may be said that Paul still cherished the hope of the Second Advent, even when he was speaking of being crucified and risen with Christ. But may we not regard this as an instance of the husk still clinging to the kernel? It is true that this spiritual communion falls short of the Christian aspiration in two respects. *Firstly*, the believer does desire a clearer vision and a closer communion than

are here and now his; his sight is often blurred, and his fellowship interrupted. But has not Christian faith, without any deliberation, transferred this vision and communion from earth to heaven? For Paul to be absent from the body was to be present with the Lord, while to be at home in the body was to be absent from Him;[1] and it is for this reason that although to him to live is Christ, to die is gain.[2] Even if the writer of 1 John was thinking of the Second Advent in the Apocalyptic sense, his words express what the Christian looks for as heaven's highest blessing. 'We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.'[3] At death on entrance into the heavenly life the clearer vision and closer communion, resulting in greater resemblance, are now expected by Christian faith. But *secondly*, this is only an individual hope, and, if it were all, it might be regarded as selfish. The Christian cannot be indifferent about earth's goal, even when he looks to heaven as his home. He desires and expects the victory of the cause of Christ in the world, the gathering in of all the nations into the Church of Christ, the extension of the Kingdom of God unto the ends of the earth, the consummation of human progress in the experienced Saviourhood and confessed Lordship of Jesus Christ throughout the world, the redemption of humanity unto God in the Son of God. Whether the fulfilment of God's purpose of grace in Christ will be accompanied even on earth by some fresh manifestation of the power and glory of Christ, is a question on which it is wise to keep silence; but what to the writer does seem certain is that the expectation of the Second Advent includes, as it is fulfilled in Christian thought and life to-day, the experience of Christ's presence here and now, the expectation of clearer vision, closer communion, and greater resemblance in heaven, and the conviction that the Sovereignty of Christ's Saviourhood will yet be fully owned on earth. Whether this Christian hope, individual and universal, is reasonable, we shall later inquire; but

[1] 2 Cor. v. 6-8. [2] Phil. i. 21. [3] 1 John iii. 2.

we must now pass to the transformation in our thought of the conception of the Resurrection of the Body.

(ii) There is one element in the primitive expectation that caused difficulty even in the Apostolic Age. When the Second Advent was expected within the first Christian generation, believers never considered the condition in which they might find themselves, if death anticipated that event in their experience. Paul has to comfort the Thessalonians regarding their dead that 'we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep,' for 'the dead in Christ shall rise first'; [1] and in 1 Corinthians he has to state more fully the difference between the raising of the dead and the sudden change that will be experienced by the living.[2] He himself seems to have felt some anxiety about his condition, if death came for him before the Second Advent. 'In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed, we shall not be found naked.' [3] Here he seems to expect that at death already the soul would be reclothed in the heavenly body. If so, why another clothing at the general resurrection? To suppose, as has been done, an *interim* body for the intermediate state, or a condition of semi-consciousness and reduced vitality till the general resurrection, when the spiritual body and the eternal life will be attained, is to indulge in worthless speculation. Christian thought, again without deliberation, cuts the Gordian knot by assuming that at death souls pass at once to their eternal destiny. We must abandon the idea of a general resurrection as involved in insoluble difficulties, as belonging to the Apocalyptic husk of the Christian hope. But what is the kernel? The Greek regarded the body as the prison of the soul, and so conceived immortality as the continuance of the disembodied soul. For the Jew man as *living soul* was the Spirit of God breathed into the flesh; and so immortality meant for him also resurrection, body united to soul.

[1] 1 Thess. iv. 15, 16. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 35, 51. [3] 2 Cor. v. 2, 3.

Our modern thought cannot maintain the Greek dualism of mind and matter, soul and body. As the physicist presses further and further back his speculation about the constitution of matter, it becomes less and less gross matter, the antithesis of mind. As the psychologist pursues his inquiry, he finds how closely related are body and mind. We cannot conceive disembodied soul; we must think of personality as having its organ. This does not mean that thought is a function of brain as the materialist argues, for mind is the *prius* of all our thinking. It does not mean that human personality is so dependent on its present organ as to be destroyed by its dissolution; but it does mean that when we try to conceive personality, we cannot but think of it as expressed in, and exercised through, an organ. As we watch the transition from inorganic to organic, as we observe the subduing of matter to the ends of mind in the changeful expression of the face, the manifold tones of the voice, even the quick gestures of the body, as we learn from science about ether, and forms of matter and force other than our senses now directly apprehend, it becomes credible that human personality may in a future life possess the necessary organ of action and communication, of a quality which will make it a perfect servant. In contrast to this natural it is possible to conceive in this sense a spiritual body. Be this conjecture as it may, the Christian hope is that complete personality will be ours in the future life. All the absurdities about the identity of the body laid in the grave and the body raised, for which the literalism of orthodoxy is responsible, fall aside in such a view, and can even be brushed aside as utterly unscriptural, as what Paul insists on is the contrast between the natural and the spiritual body.

(iii) The conception of the *General Judgment* must undergo a similar transformation; and the transformation has begun in the New Testament itself. The Fourth Gospel represents the ministry of Jesus as the judgment of men. 'He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath

not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' [1] Jesus Himself is represented as saying, 'For judgment I am come into this world; that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.' [2] The grace of Christ is the test of man's moral condition; faith in Him shows affinity and attraction to truth and goodness; rejection of Him proves antagonism; thus human character reveals itself in the choice for or against Him. We are compelled to recognise to-day that there are men morally Christian in spirit and purpose who are hindered by intellectual difficulties from making the Christian confession. When clearer light comes to them, we may be confident their worthy life will find its completion in their faith in Him. There are also men who make the Christian confession, whose lives do not accord with Christ's demand; if they are not consciously deceivers, the clearer light that will come to them will we may expect lead them to change the semblance for the substance of the Christian life. With all the necessary qualifications the Christian must maintain, however, that the attitude of the soul to Christ is decisive of moral condition, and ultimately of final destiny. The common assumption in Christian popular belief is that each soul at death passes to heaven or hell, to perfect bliss or to absolute woe. This assumption is unwarranted. We cannot assert that the development for good or evil is so completed at death as to exclude all possibility of further change. Even the saints are not perfect in holiness, and the physical event cannot be conceived as perfecting them. And the sinners are not so abandoned to evil as to be beyond all hope. It is a legitimate inference from the position Christian faith assigns to Christ as Judge to maintain that none is finally condemned until there is an absolute rejection of Christ, known sufficiently to make that choice the decisive revelation of the moral character.

[1] John iii. 18, 19. [2] ix. 39.

If any in this life have so rejected Him no man can tell, or should dare to judge: how the choice will be given in the next life it would be folly for us to speculate. Even orthodox thought has made the concession regarding the heathen that they cannot be condemned for not believing in One of whom they have never heard, and has suggested that they will be judged by 'the light of nature.' But can the slum-dwellers in our cities be regarded as having so heard and understood as to be capable of a fully conscious choice? And is it not more in accord with the Christian view of God that somehow and somewhere every man will have opportunity of accepting or rejecting the fully revealed grace of God in Jesus Christ?

(iv) As regards the *final destiny* of men the doctrine current in orthodox evangelical Protestantism was that the wicked at death passed to hell to suffer endless torments, and the righteous to heaven to enjoy eternal bliss. But two alternative views have been urged. The *theory of conditional immortality* is this: man is not by nature immortal, but eternal life is the gift of Christ; thus those who believe in Christ gain immortality, the unbelieving cease to exist. Thus is the theory stated as broadly as possible without regard to the differences of individual view. *The theory of universal restoration* is that ultimately all will be saved; for it is inconceivable that the love of God should not finally overcome all sin and unbelief. Texts can be quoted in support of each of these views; and it is not our purpose here to decide which is more or less scriptural; but we may test each by the general principles of Christian faith. *Firstly*, as has already been urged in the previous section, we cannot regard physical death as so decisive of final destiny. It is moral and spiritual condition that fixes the judgment. *Secondly*, it is incredible that the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ should keep His creatures and children alive to endure endless torments. How it was possible for Christian men to believe in God as love, and yet to believe that multitudes were in agony, and would be for ever in hell, is one of these contradictions of

the human mind that the writer cannot pretend to understand. *Thirdly*, eternal life is not to be conceived as an external gift bestowed on condition of faith in Christ, nor can man be thought of as by nature mortal. Personality as rational, moral, spiritual, social, is destined, because adapted, for immortality. The eternal life in Christ is the fulfilment of the soul's possibility and promise. The theory of conditional immortality clings to single texts, often interpreted with a prosaic literalness, and ignores these wider considerations of the Christian view of man as child of God; but it does suggest the truth that if the personality deliberately rejects its own fulfilment in the eternal life in Christ, it may forfeit its destiny, because losing its adaptation, for immortality. It seems to the writer credible that the finally impenitent, if such there should be, not by any act of divine omnipotence annihilating them, but by the inevitable decay of the personality refusing to realise its ideal, may cease to be; volition, consciousness, vitality, diminishing to vanishing point. *Fourthly*, this conjecture is forced upon the writer because he cannot commit himself to *dogmatic universalism*. Divine omnipotence cannot solve moral and religious problems. Salvation must be as freely accepted by man as it is offered by God. We find men in this life so defiant of goodness and grace that we cannot assert that final impenitence is impossible. The grace of God in Christ now appears so sufficient, so urgent, so final, that we cannot conceive what more God can do to save man. We may desire and hope that all shall be saved, but we cannot assert the salvation of all, and must recognise the possibility of a final impenitence. We must leave the issue of God's world to God's wisdom, holiness, and grace.

(4) It has been necessary thus to translate into terms of modern Christian thought the eschatology of the New Testament, but in dealing with the Christian hope, and the defence and commendation of it, we can now confine ourselves to two topics only—the individual and the universal aspects of the hope. The problem of the condi-

tions of the judgment of men and of the final destiny of the wicked must engage Christian thought, but it does not properly belong to the Christian hope. That hope is confined to what the Christian expects for himself and the cause of Christ. For himself the Christian believes that death does not end all; that the eternal life in Christ begun on earth will be continued in heaven; that his mental, moral, and spiritual development will be completed till he knows as he is known, till he sees Christ as He is, till he loves Him as He is worthy of being loved, till he shall be like Him, till in Christ God shall be for him all in all. For the cause of Christ he believes that the Gospel shall be spread unto the ends of the earth, that the Kingdom of God shall grow until all human society shall be under the sovereignty of the divine grace, that the purpose of God to redeem mankind and to reconcile the world unto Himself in Christ shall at last be accomplished. Is this hope a vain dream, or is it the divine promise and the divine pledge of a gracious and blessed reality? Can we show any reasons for this hope? We may look at the universal before we turn to the individual aspect of the hope.

II

(1) It may seem the extravagance of thought, the audacity of belief, to suppose that the whole world will be won for Christ; but there are 'reasons and reasons' why we are not 'ashamed of the Gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.' The 'little Jew' who made this declaration when he purposed to visit Rome with his message would have appeared as foolish in the eyes of Roman lawyer or Greek philosopher; and yet within three centuries a Roman Emperor decided that it was good policy to confess himself a Christian. When the Roman Empire fell, and the hordes of barbarism overwhelmed its law and order, how foolish would have seemed the hope that Rome would lay the yoke of its faith on

the necks of its conquerors; and yet these races, after centuries of theological and ecclesiastical subjection, restored the religion they had received to a form worthier than that in which it had come to them. For centuries the Christian Churches were not missionary, but at the beginning of the nineteenth century the vision of a world to be won for Christ appeared to a few elect spirits, who, though mocked and opposed, resolved to carry through the enterprise, and now a Christian Church would be ashamed to confess that it did not believe in missions. If we think of all the lands where a beginning of Christian culture, civilisation, and society has been made, of the converts won and the churches founded, and the sure promise of still greater things to come within one century, we may from the history of the past draw encouragement for the future.

(2) But when we look beyond the missionary enterprise to the general historical conditions that have made it, and are still making it possible, we gain still fuller assurance. The world is becoming one as it never was before. Conquest, colonisation, commerce, are binding the ends of the earth together. There are now no closed lands, no isolated races, no peoples that can live unto themselves. Our daily papers contain reports of the conditions in Thibet. China is, as fast as it can, imitating the institutions of the 'foreign devils.' Men are talking of 'the black peril' in America and the 'yellow peril' in Asia; and surely on the Congo and the Amazon 'the white' peril may be spoken of. For the European who comes without Christ to any people is a danger to it. Whether we welcome the change or not, mankind is becoming one body, the members of which must suffer or rejoice together. The Roman Empire fell because it had no soul great enough for its body, for Christianity came to it too late to prevent its decay. Does not the body of humanity want a soul? Unless the closer relations of nations and races and continents are to become the occasion of growing jealousy, enmity, and conflict, there must be found some harmonising

purpose. Do we not need a common human morality, and, to sustain it, a common human religion? If we think that morality can do without religion, we had better study closely the moral problem in France or in Japan, and we will discover that both French and Japanese lovers of their country are looking about for some faith that will cleanse and uplift life.

(3) It is held by some thinkers that the religion the world needs must be either a mosaic of the best in all the great world religions, or a Christianity that has adapted itself to the genius of each race. The comparative study of religions is sometimes held as disproving the exclusive claim that the missionary enterprise is making for the Christian faith. It is impossible here to deal with the subject as it deserves; but the writer may be allowed to state his conviction as one who has carefully compared the religions of the world as they are, not only in literature but in life, that the fundamental Christian verities, the personality, perfection, and Fatherhood of God, the reality of sin, the necessity of atonement, the sufficiency of the grace of Jesus Christ, the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit of God, the hope of a blessed and a glorious immortality, stated with no sectarian accretions or ecclesiastical assumptions, can and do make their appeal to the human reason and conscience everywhere. He has not discovered any truths in other religions that the Christian Gospel lacks; he has not found in one of them the moral dynamic that Christian faith offers; he has not seen a Master of the soul who can in truth and grace be placed above, or even beside, Jesus Christ. Modern Christian scholarship is surely enabling us to strip off the husk of European modes of thought from the kernel of the Christian truth, which is no more Occidental than Oriental; and the history of the Christian Church should teach us that distortion and corruptions enter where the environment is allowed to dominate the form in which that truth is presented.[1]

[1] See *The Christian Certainty*, pp. 8-15.

(4) But it may be urged that the problems which a universal religion might solve are urgent, and the progress of Christianity during the last century has been relatively so slow, that it is more likely that the opportunity will pass, and the world-history assume a phase much less favourable than the present appears to be for the Christian conquest. Calculations have been made to prove that at the present rate of advance some centuries must elapse before India and China can become really Christian. But these calculations ignore four considerations which sustain hope.

(i) The last century has been preparing the conditions for a much more rapid advance in the future than in the past. Society in India and China is being leavened by the Christian spirit, and there will soon be an environment much more congenial to Christian faith than that of the past has been. It is unreasonable to ignore the changed moral and social situation since the beginning of last century, and assume that only the same rate of progress will be maintained.

(ii) In moral and religious progress there is a factor that is not calculable. There are *crises* as well as continuity in human history; periods of slow advance are followed by eras of rapid transformation. For faith there are divine initiatives which determine unexpected and inexplicable stages of progress. As has already been indicated in dealing with Jesus' view of the coming of the Kingdom of God, there is the divine wisdom, power and grace immanent in human history, and awaiting the fuller exercise of man's faith for fuller manifestation. The Protestant Reformation and the Evangelical Revival show that great changes can be affected in a short time. In Korea there has been in recent years a movement towards Christianity which recalls to the witnesses the records of the Apostolic Age. More faith in the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus, in the presence and power of the Spirit of God, and more confident and strenuous effort, inspired by faith, will to-day, as in days past, speed the coming of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

(iii) The present opportunity may not be used to the full by the Christian Church; the conditions of world-history may assume a phase less favourable to the spread and growth of the common faith for mankind; social prejudice, national pride, commercial greed, may delay that unifying of mankind in Christ; for the history of the past teaches us that progress is not uniform, but that stagnation or even retrogression follows advance; yet the believer in Christ will not lose hope; his judgment of the value of Christ to himself will sustain his expectation that Christ will yet become the common treasure of mankind, that the Father-God will recover one family on earth.

(iv) If there be any reason in the Universe at all, its movement must be towards some goal; progress must have some consummation; and what fulfilment of the world's hope can be conceived fitter or worthier than that all mankind should become one in the common knowledge of, common love for, common obedience to, the one God and Father in Christ?

III

(1) We may anticipate that 'far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves,' but we do not expect to participate in it, at least on earth; for death stands at the portal, and the hope of the Apostolic Age of survival to the Second Coming of the Lord does not sustain us. But we are inspired by the hope of a blessed and glorious immortality. Can reasons be given for that hope? For the Christian the best reason is in his own faith in Jesus Christ.

(i) For the Hebrew saint one of the hardest problems was the doubt and fear that his happy fellowship with God might be interrupted by death, as in the common belief Sheol, the abode of the dead, was unblessed by the presence of God. But faith triumphed over this uncertainty; and the saint found in his joy in God, and God's favour towards him, the assurance that God's companions would not be left death's victims. It is true that the

interpretation is disputed by some scholars; but for the writer it seems certain that in the sixteenth and seventeenth Psalms faith in God's unbroken fellowship soars upward to hope of victory over death, and blessedness in God's presence. 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one (loved and loving) to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' 'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.' It is this hope, borne of faith, that Jesus Himself confirms; for the proof of immortality He derives from the words, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'; that 'God is not the God of the dead, but of the living,'[1] is no *argumentum ad hominem*, but a declaration of the truth that fellowship with God is the promise and pledge of immortality. In the same passage He corrects the gross view of the future life with which the Sadducees taunted the Pharisees; and affirms that the material and sensuous conditions of this life will not be continued into, or at the resurrection restored in the future life.

(ii) Possibly it was His sense of filial relation to God that enabled Jesus Himself to face His death with the assurance of His own resurrection, and to offer that assurance as a comfort to His disciples when He foretold His death to them. As they would not take seriously His warning, so they were uncheered by His assurance. The evidence for the Resurrection of Christ has already been dealt with in Chapter IV. That fact is the sure foundation of the Christian hope. He is the first-fruits of the harvest of life from the grave; He is the first-born among many brethren; He is the life-giving spirit. As He was raised, so will all that are His. Because He lives, in Him they live also. The aspiration of the Hebrew has become the certainty of the Christian saint.

(iii) But in the Christian life itself there is the assurance

[1] Matt. xxii. 32

of the Christian hope. In Christ the believer lives as a child of God, forgiven, cleansed, renewed, being sanctified and perfected by the Spirit of God, gaining an ever closer intimacy with God as Father, looking less and less on the things seen and temporal, and more and more on the things unseen and eternal, finding all things working together for his good. The life that he now has 'hid with Christ in God' is an eternal life, for a life sharing God's own eternity; and so death is, according to his growing faith, 'null and nought,' and immortality is an inheritance, into the possession of which he is already entering.

(iv) It is the hour and the article of death that tests whether such a faith is an illusion, or has hold on reality. The emotional condition at death is often dependent on physical states; and so doubt and fear, which faith still holds in check, do not prove that the confidence has been misplaced. But, on the other hand, there are well-authenticated cases of triumph over physical agony, of songs of praise in the valley of the shadow, of a glow upon the countenance that seemed like a gleam caught of the coming glory. Many who have been bereaved of their dearest, but have had the Christian hope to sustain them in the hour of loneliness, have come to feel without any sensible tokens the reality of the continued life of their beloved; and in their most sacred moments of fellowship with the Lord have known also the communion of the saints in heaven and on earth. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, they have felt themselves encompassed by the great cloud of witnesses (Heb. xii. 1).

(2) For the Christian believer this evidence suffices, and more than suffices; for if Christ be not risen, his faith is vain, he is yet in his sin, the loved ones who 'are fallen asleep in Christ are perished,' he is 'of all men most miserable.'[1] The certainty of his hope is bound up with the reality of this experience of Christ as Saviour and Lord. But to commend this Christian hope to those who have not yet the Christian experience, it is necessary to show how

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 14-19.

it completes and confirms the other arguments that can make appeal to the human conscience or reason.

(i) In describing man's personality, it was pointed out that he is in the making, and not made; most characteristic of him are his ideals which are being gradually realised. He is committed to the quest for truth, the struggle for holiness, the need of love, the yearning for blessedness. Here his ideals are never perfectly realised; his mental, moral, and social development is never completed; his aspiration, purpose, and endeavour point above and beyond the range of his earthly experience. It is not from man's failure or disappointment on earth that we argue for the necessity of success and satisfaction in heaven; but the proof lies rather in this that his present attainment gives promise of attainment still greater; it is as he realises his ideals that he becomes more and more aware how much greater they are than any realisation which under present conditions is possible to him. There are many who so live that this promise of immortality is not theirs; but we may surely regard the men who live for the ideals as typical, and those who are content with earth as undeveloped. More significant for the meaning of man's life is the saint or seer than the worldling or sensualist. It is against reason to suppose that these ideals are only mocking illusions, and that all man's aspiration and endeavour for truth, holiness, love, blessedness must end in nothingness. As we appreciate these ideals, therefore, shall we apprehend this proof of immortality.

(ii) We may develop more fully the argument implicit in the human affections. Love protests against death as an end of the dear fellowship of heart with heart. It is impossible to believe that the loved are lost. Even the natural affections assume the continuance of the loved ones, as the funeral rites of nearly all peoples show. As love becomes more ideal, a fellowship in the higher interests of life, the worth of each personality to the other makes the possibility of utter loss through death less conceivable. Tennyson in his *In Memoriam* has shown how hope seeks

root in, draws nourishment from, and grows in strength by, the soil of love bereaved. Marriage as the Sadducees in their story represented it, as the means of raising up seed, must cease with the earthly conditions; but the love of husband and wife which becomes a common life in goodness and godliness cannot cease to be. So in every sacred bond that binds human souls to one another there is surely given a pledge of love's immortality.

(iii) There is another argument, which has commended itself to so great thinkers as Butler and Kant, but which seems to move on altogether a lower plane of thought and feeling. A common assumption that condition and character accord is contradicted by the common facts of life; the righteous do not always prosper, nor do the wicked always perish. The view of the first Psalm is the problem of the Book of Job; the hero of that tragedy suffers, and yet he will not be convinced by the arguments of his friends that he is suffering for his wickedness. The problem here is not solved, but closed by the declaration that God's ways are inscrutable. The portrait of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah liii. offers a solution; the righteous suffers on behalf of, for the salvation of, the wicked. A solution of the problem has, however, been sought in the assumption that in a future life the inequalities of the present will be redressed; the divine judgment on character will there be made manifest in condition; the righteous will be blessed, and the wicked will be miserable. As a desire for personal happiness, and for the punishment of those who have wronged us, this hope of future judgment is not distinctively Christian. It involves the assumption, too, that God must reward goodness with happiness, and wickedness with misery; but what if goodness is its own reward, and wickedness its own penalty? A Christian form may be given to the arguments by regarding the future life as the opportunity for final decision which the conditions of this life do not equally give to all men.

(iv) An argument for immortality was based on the

indivisibility of the soul; as we have outgrown this metaphysic, such a proof can no longer appeal to us. But it suggests another in accord with our modern psychology. In the course of personal development, the unity and the identity of the personality advances. A man becomes more completely master of himself; thought, feeling, will become more harmonious; the past is taken up more fully into the present, and the future is taken account of. Consciousness tends to become more self-consciousness. As experience is gathered, as character is formed, the personality becomes more distinctive, less dependent on the environment, and more determined from within itself. The dependence on the body can never be abolished, and as physical infirmity comes, the personality is hindered in its activities by its organ; but yet the personality becomes more and more identified with the inner life which is less dependent on the body. If we consider the long duration, the manifold factors, the costly experiences, and the strenuous endeavours of this process of personal development, apart from the ideals that are being realised, or the relationships formed, can such a product be destined for nothing better than dissolution? The growing detachment of the personality in its progress from the body also points to the possibility that the personality so formed is not entirely dependent on its organ, and may, having by means of that organ attained a certain stage of development, become independent of it.

(3) The objections to the Christian hope may be glanced at.

(i) For *naturalism* man is so entirely a product of nature that it seems absurd to exempt him from the universal process of evolution and devolution, birth, growth, decay, death. But this estimate of man is not only contradicted by philosophical idealism and Christian faith, it is opposed to man's consciousness of himself; he does distinguish himself as personal from nature, and we must deny the testimony of his reason, conscience,

affections, and ideals if we are to assign to him the place naturalism does. Mr. Balfour, in his book on the *Foundations of Belief*, has given fully the argument against naturalism from the standpoint of man's higher interests.

(ii) *Materialism* declares immortality impossible, because thought is only a function of brain, and the dissolution of the body must be the destruction of the self. Even if the vital processes could be reduced to chemical and physical changes, yet in every organism there is a direction of the processes that neither chemistry nor physics can explain. It has already been shown that Sir Oliver Lodge maintains that life transcends and utilises force; Dr. Ward has shown that in organic processes there is teleology, the mental factor; and Professor James maintains that the relation of brain to mind is not productive, but permissive or transmissive: the body is the musical instrument; it is not the melody, nor the mind that conceives, and delights in it. Materialism is so inadequate as a philosophy of the world, that its objection to the Christian hope need not be taken seriously.

(iii) There is a *secularism* which regards this earthly life as sufficient for man, and so denies the necessity of another life; there is also a *pessimism* for which this earthly life is so unrelievably bad, that any continuance of existence seems undesirable. Both these attitudes to life are so utterly opposed to the Christian view, that it is only if the Christian view is shown false in its entirety that these objections need be taken into account. But they are assuredly opposed to the common sentiment. Men generally do not find this life so good that they cannot desire a better, nor do they find it so bad that non-existence would seem to them desirable. Christianity offers an eternal life that links the earthly life with the heavenly in the ever-growing good of the holy and blessed life of the child of God, knowing, trusting and surrendering to the eternal and infinite holiness and blessedness of the Father-God. Such a faith begets an unquenchable and sustaining hope.

(4) The individual and universal aspect of the Christian hope cannot be kept apart. In the Epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 39-40) there is a statement that suggests a close connection. 'And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.' Does not this suggest that the blessed and glorious immortality of believers will not be completed until the purpose of God on earth is fulfilled, until the Kingdom of God is come on earth as it ever is in heaven? We have been led to abandon the external form of the eschatological programme of the New Testament; but we may now discern in it a fresh truth, that there will be a consummation of human history, as to the form of which it is idle to speculate, and that the generations who have fallen asleep in Christ will participate in it, and find their own glorious and blessed immortality completed therein. Whether those who have passed within the veil of death do now in any way share our earthly life, in pity for and help of us, none can affirm, but who could deny? Can earth's sin, sorrow, and shame in any way reach their glory and blessedness? To mortals on earth it may seem as if any such contact would lessen the glory and blessedness of the immortal. But who can say? Sacrificial love may taste the deepest blessedness, and display the brightest glory. The redeemed may be sharing the saving ministry of the Redeemer. But be this as it may, there seems to be more probability in the conjecture that the redeemed shall share the joy, and shall be made perfect in the triumph of the Redeemer in the world, which in Him God is reconciling unto Himself. What Paul means when he declares that in the end the Son Himself shall be subjected 'that God may be all in all,' has baffled all expositors. Does it mean that as the life of mankind becomes one in Christ, and through Him one with God, not by absorption, but in holy love, so God shall be known as one in Father, Son and Spirit, as we cannot now conceive that divine unity? (1 Cor. xv. 28).

(5) This Christian hope thus carries us to the very confines of what we dare to think. But such an aspiration is not to be dismissed as a vain speculation, for it grows out of a real experience of salvation through Christ from sin, death, and doom, to the light, the life, and the love of God Himself. The attempt has been made in this volume to state as briefly and yet as fully as possible the argument for the Christian faith, to commend to reason and conscience Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord; but the writer must close with the confession that logical demonstration seems to himself inadequate to lead from unbelief to faith. There must be felt the moral and religious need of forgiveness from God, there must be the hunger and the thirst of the soul for God; there must be apprehended the reality of the Saviour from sin, the Bread from Heaven and the Water of Life, in whom God meets man to save and bless. The apologist to be fully effective must become the evangelist, and his own personal experience is the strongest argument that he can offer. 'I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.' 'I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come. Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' [1]

[1] 2 Tim. i. 12; Romans viii. 38, 39.

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